



Percy Bysshe Shelley

BEING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, HARRIET
SHELLEY, MARY SHELLEY, AND
THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG

AS SHOWN IN LETTERS BETWEEN THEM
NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME
EDITED BY WALTER SIDNEY SCOTT

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HARRIET & MARY
is the second book of a trilogy,
edited by Walter Sidney Scott and
published by the Golden Cockerel Press,
of which the first book was
THE ATHENIANS
and the third, in preparation, will be
SHELLEY AT OXFORD

Printed in Great Britain

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
THE HONoured MEMORY OF
THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG
A FAITHFUL FRIEND

. the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found ;
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded.
The truth now came upon me ; on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

Shelley: *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto V.

I once had a friend, whom an inextricable
multitude of circumstances has forced me to
treat with apparent neglect. To him I dedi-
cate this essay. If he finds my own words con-
demn me, will he not forgive?

Shelley's MS.: *An Essay on Friendship*.

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INTRODUCTION

THE LETTERS WITH WHICH THIS BOOK IS CONCERNED are those written by Shelley to his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg, during a period of partial and temporary estrangement, occasioned by the real or fancied attachment of the latter to Shelley's first wife, Harriet Westbrook, and also the letters of Mary Godwin to Hogg, written during the fateful year 1815, after Shelley's desertion of Harriet and elopement with Mary.

The originals of these letters passed after Hogg's death to his daughter Prudentia, who in turn left them to her cousin, the late Mr John Jefferson Hogg, together with a great quantity of her father's correspondence and manuscripts. They have never before been published.

For many years it has been a matter of common belief that both Harriet and Mary were too good for this common earth; that Harriet was a woman much sinned against, her virtue attacked by Hogg, carelessly cast aside by Shelley when he had no more affection for her, and at last driven to suicide; whereas Mary, though of unusual ideas as to sexual morality, must be forgiven firstly as the daughter of Godwin, who could therefore necessarily have had no fair chance of imbibing the respectable ideas of her class and generation, and secondly as the adoring wife of a poet of genius. These beliefs, however, will require radical alteration in the light of the fresh evidence which is provided by these letters.

The publication both raises—and answers—questions of considerable importance to students of the poet's life. Firstly, why did Shelley write to Hogg from Keswick? and what was really in his mind at the time? Secondly, why did Hogg alter the letters before publication? Thirdly, was Shelley suffering from one of his frequent hallucinations at the time of writing them? Fourthly, was Hogg to blame in the matter of Harriet?

In the study of these letters the answers to these questions are to be found. Those who read must judge for themselves. In Chapter IV, under the heading 'Conclusions', I give what I myself feel to be the answers.

Upon the letters from Mary to Hogg, as I have said in Chapter III, I

have made but little comment. As to what were Mary's real feelings for Hogg, and his for her, the reader must decide for himself.

The orthography of the writers I have left unchanged, and I have only made alterations in the punctuation where they seemed essential to enable the modern reader to understand the meaning. Certain abbreviated words I have printed in full.

The frontispiece is taken from the portrait of Shelley in the first pirated edition of his Poems. It is evidently a variant of the well-known Curran portrait.

I am indebted to my mother-in-law, Mrs Jefferson Hogg, for her kindness in giving me the original transcripts of Shelley's letters from Keswick, which I have collated with Shelley's own manuscript, and also to my brother-in-law, Captain R. Jefferson Hogg, M.C., R.E., for giving me access to Mary Godwin's letters.

Selborne

W. S. SCOTT

CHAPTER I: 'A RUIN'D ROSEBUD'

*A star look'd down from heaven and loved a flower
Grown in earth's garden—loved it for an hour :
Let eyes which trace his orbit in the spheres
Refuse not, to a ruin'd rosebud, tears.*

William Watson: *Shelley and Harriet.*

BEFORE CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING LETTERS, IT IS necessary to have some clear knowledge as to Shelley's first marriage, and the estrangement between the friends which followed closely upon it.

In January, 1811, while still an undergraduate of University College, Shelley had made the acquaintance of Harriet Westbrook, a fascinating and pretty sixteen-year-old school-fellow of his sisters' at Mrs Fenning's Academy for Young Ladies on Clapham Common, then a fashionable suburban retreat.

Harriet's elder sister, Eliza, who was her senior by more than fourteen years and had acted as a mother towards her ever since the death of their own mother, was a match-maker. She interested herself in the idea of arranging a match between her sister, the beauty of the family, and the young heir not only to a baronetcy, but to a very considerable fortune. The father of these girls was a retired tavern-keeper, nicknamed 'Jew Westbrook', who had made a reasonable fortune, and was thus enabled to bring up his daughters in some style. Eliza felt herself justified in seeking for her young sister a husband of a better position than that to which she would naturally have aspired.

In accordance with his youthful views on the wickedness of harsh parental control, Shelley quickly became the tool of the match-making Eliza, and Harriet herself put the final touches upon it by emphasizing the cruelty of her father in insisting upon her returning to the school at Clapham, where, she said, she was unkindly treated by a number of her school-fellows.

In a letter to Hogg, Shelley described the situation. 'I shall certainly

come to York, but Harriet Westbrook will decide whether now or in three weeks. Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. . . . She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my protection. . . . We shall see you at York.'

In the same letter Shelley refers to Hogg's 'arguments for matrimonialism', by which, he says, he is now almost convinced. Hogg had made him see how grossly unfair to Harriet it would be if he carried out his first proposal of eloping with her, and not marrying her.

To this urgently-expressed view Shelley gave in, and on their arrival in Edinburgh he and Harriet were married according to the rites of the Church of Scotland, although without fulfilling the necessary qualification of fifteen days' residence in the country.

They made only one stop on the way, at York, where Hogg was then reading law in a conveyancer's chambers. He and Shelley did not meet, but Shelley left a note for him, asking him to lend them enough money to live upon until his allowance became due.

Upon the receipt of this note, Hogg, who was just about to leave York for a holiday, and had not seen his friend for some time, followed them to Edinburgh. After his return to York, they in turn followed him, and took rooms in the house where he lodged.

Shortly after their arrival at York, Shelley found it necessary to go to Sussex to put his financial affairs in order, leaving Harriet in the care of his friend. During Shelley's absence something occurred between Hogg and Harriet; exactly what it was, whether flirtation, or something rather more, has been a matter of contention for all Shelley's biographers; the letters may help towards a decision.

At all events, Eliza came to York, probably at Harriet's wish, for she was devoted to her elder sister. Eliza came; and with her coming the serpent entered paradise.

What happened on Shelley's return to York is fully treated in the chapter on the estrangement between the two friends. Shelley and his bride, without any notice to Hogg, left York for Keswick, from which place the following letters were written.

THE 'KESWICK' LETTERS

Of the eight letters which Shelley wrote from Keswick (here for the first time printed as Shelley wrote them), not one bears either a date or a dated post-mark. It is extremely difficult, in consequence, to put them in their order of writing; and, after much consideration, I can see no valid reason not to adopt the sequence in which they were printed (in their altered shape), by Mr Roger Ingpen, in his collection of Shelley Letters.

Accepting his order, then, the first is a letter which was apparently written immediately after Shelley and Harriet arrived at their destination. From the direction on the outside, 'to be forwarded instantly to wherever he is', it seems probable that the travellers anticipated that Hogg was likely to have started in pursuit of them, an idea which, as far as we know, never crossed his mind.

They had evidently left York in such a hurry that they were not able to take all their belongings with them, and had to ask Hogg to forward what had been left behind.

LETTER I

(As written by Shelley)

Keswick Cumberland

You were surprised at our sudden departure, I have no time however now either to account for it or enter into the investigation which we agreed upon. I have arrived at this place after some days incessant travelling, which has left me no leisure to write to you. Tomorrow you will hear more. You have been led either by false reasoning, or as I conjecture more probable, real feeling, into a great & terrible mistake; to those who hold that all happens for the best it would appear that the consequences of your late reasonings will operate in future as a beacon, to guide you far from similar danger. To me it appears in all its features disgusting & horrid. Do not suppose that I mean by thus fairly stating what I think of the late unexpected disclosure, to assume on the strength of my apparent [illeg:] the character of a dictator, a lecturer . . . far otherwise. I expect to derive more instruction than I may be adequate to give. To discuss is the privilege

of a friend, and a friend I am yet willing, nay eager, to be to you ; tho' you have forgotten for once that you had promised to be mine.

Harriet has remarked to me that the suddenness of the change of your sentiments was far from being natural ; this I think too. It is impossible also that Harriet's arguments, which were certainly far from being logically correct, however really true, could have induced a sudden change. The emanation of divine grace is the only cause I can conceive adequate to this effect. I shall doubt your word, perhaps. Let not your blood boil ; if it does, just look back, & freeze it.—I shall perhaps think you a liar ; start not ; still I shall be your friend. It is not you but your mistakes, your vices, these ignominies that I abhor. —This letter was not intended to be so long.

To your real true interests believe no friend so sincerely attached as I am. . . I can never forget what once you were.

Your's Percy S.

Will you send my Box per coach to Mr. D. Crosthwaites, Town Head, Keswick, Cumberland.

*T. Jefferson Hogg Esqr. Mr. Strickland's Blake Street York
to be forwarded instantly wherever he is*

LETTER I (as printed by Hogg)

Keswick, Wednesday night.

You were surprised at our sudden departure ; I have no time, however, now, either to account for it or enter into the investigation which we agreed upon. I have arrived at this place after some days of incessant travelling, which has left me no leisure to write to you at length. To-morrow you will hear more.

With real, true interest, I constantly think of you, believe me, my friend, so sincerely am I attached to you. I can never forget you.

Yours, Percy S.

Will you send my box per coach to Mr. D. Crosthwaite's, Town Head, Keswick, Cumberland.

LETTER II
(As written by Shelley)

Post Office Keswick Cumberland
Not Mr. D. Crosthwaites

I promised to write to you today my dear friend, but again . . . another day has elapsed in the occupation of preparing our residence and night has come, when the Post leaves us. Convince me that it is right, morally, correctly right; that your own interest, your own real interest, demands it, & no power on earth shall prevent our living with you. . . . At present it appears to me the necessary cause of misery, distraction. You will again be tempted to what you now regard with horror. You will see when it is too late the misery you have caused. Your feelings are so exquisitely keen . . . if such have been your feelings now . . . if they could have been your feelings now . . . if they could have urged you to the dismaying brink of suicide, an act which involves we know not what. . . . What then would be your feelings . . . & to these would I by ill timed indulgence to yourself & to me, expose you . . . Never, never, never; this must not be.—Nothing, you say, would sooner have driven you to demand satisfaction so soon as an accusation of what you have since attempted. And are you not, my friend, warned by this fearful lesson? Is it not impressive? Does it not now recur to your mind? How confident were you then! Can you conceive confidence more firm? It cannot be firmer than firmest. How then will you again dare to expose yourself to what is so tyrannical, whose tyranny you have so perfectly experienced? I hope I am not prejudiced. I attempt to be otherwise. I hope, generally speaking, I have appeared so to you. I attach little value to the monopoly of exclusive cohabitation. You know that frequently I have spoken slightly of it . . . this I would not value. Were this to have been yielded to you, & the sentiments with which we regarded each other still to have remained unchanged, suppose not that I would have refused you what I too might share, what I should not much care utterly to resign; (you see I am as explicit as you were.) But it is not this alone, it is the consideration what men have chosen to make of this, from which I perhaps am not quite free, what you certainly retain, what Harriet, (the last the greatest complication) still cherishes as a prejudice interwoven with the fibres of her being—this is the point; that if you lived with us

you would be driven to this last consummation of your love for Harriet. I can have little doubt of this, without being a sceptic as to your virtue. You would again deceive yourself. You would fancy it was virtue, & passion prolific in excuses would coin thousands when so great was to be the purchase. Your last letter I have Read as I would read your soul . . . yet Oh! how inconsistent is passion! Beware, my friend; my dear unhappy friend, whose wretchedness is mine, how keenly words cannot tell.

We remain at Keswick. We settle here at least for some time— I will never go to the South again—

Adieu Yours most affectionately, most unalterably

Percy Shelley

T. Jefferson Hogg Esq Mr. Strickland's Blake Street York

Sealed in scarlet wax with the tip of a pencil, and marked with the postal charge, 8d.

LETTER II
(As printed by Hogg)

*Post Office, Keswick, Cumberland ;
not Mr. D. Crosthwaite's.*

I promised to write to you to-day, my dear friend, but again another day has elapsed in the occupation of preparing our residence, and night has come on, when the post leaves us.

We all greatly regret that 'your own interests, your own real interests', should compel you to remain at present at York. But pray, write often; your last letter I have read, as I would read your soul.

We remain at Keswick. We settle here, at least for some time.—I will never go to the south again. Adieu.

Yours most affectionately, most unalterably,

Percy Shelley.

Is it credible that the foregoing letter is that of a man whose greatest friend has just attempted his wife's honour, and who has received a let-

ter of apology for making such a mistake? Is it not vastly more probable that it is the letter of a man whose friend has fallen mildly in love with the writer's wife, an affair of propinquity and youthful attraction, and that the friend has expressed his regrets, together with a determination not to offend again?

Suppose for the sake of clarifying the issue, that Shelley had indeed reason to find Hogg guilty of an attack upon Harriet's virtue, or even the thought of attempting such an attack, is this the sort of letter which common sense would anticipate that he would write? Is it not far more probable that he was the victim of an hallucination, as so frequently happened both before and after this incident? Is it not likely that Eliza Westbrook, in her notorious jealousy and bitter dislike of Hogg, endeavoured to embitter Shelley's mind against a friend, who perhaps may have been foolish in his expressions of admiration for Harriet, but never went a step further than honour allowed?

LETTER III (As written by Shelley)

Keswick, Cumberland

Your letters are arrived . . . you did right in conceiving [illeg: conjecturing?] that Richmond was a blind, but I knew it not, & Keswick is our residence, to which place I trust that you will not follow us, until we have decided on it's rectitude & usefulness. You have loved . . . you have adored . . . what? what are these fine feelings, these exquisite susceptibilities? they are not even more refined, they are direct estimations of self . . . they are the offspring of vanity, vanity perhaps unconfessed, yet self-centred, self-possessing. Certainly no desire either for Harriet's happiness or that of any other human being excepting yourself has been the cause of all our present misery . . .

Tell me that it 'twas another, & I will adore you as the first of men, as now I love you as the dearest to me. Have you alone your share of misery? Stand you alone preeminent in suffering, exquisite as undeserved? And what am I? . . . nothing! a speck in an Universe. All this is true, yet am I not wretched. Is my wretchedness less keen because it was undeserved? . . . Was it undeserved? What

is desert?—Your crime has been selfishness. . . Have I not known you disinterested? . . Have I not known you the best, the noblest of men & will you soon perfect that character. . . Having committed one mistake, will you rush into others more dismayingly terrible, rather than rationally endeavour to obviate the evil consequences of the past? Will you do so?—Then are you not him whom I love, whom I deem not only [illeg:], but capable of exciting the emulation, attracting the admiration of millions. I did esteem you as a superior being. I took you for one who was to give laws to us poor beings who grovel beneath. Art thou fallen . . not fallen like Lucifer, never to rise again . . Become yourself . . . Bear pain . . . Tho' I think you will, I shall not tell you that we shall meet again, lest I convert disinterestedness into selfishness . . . Live some time by yourself, & if your firmness is not sufficient to bear pain without hope of reward . . . know that we meet again. '

Your letter appears to me sincere . . . I will not say it is, but that it appears so to me. I am cautious now what I believe. I tremble. Have I not reason? I had no time when I wrote last. I have less now. I am dismayed. I ramble [?tremble] . . . is it so? Are we parted, you . . . I . . . Forgive this wildness. I am half mad. I am wretchedly miserable. I look on Harriet. [Illeg: ? I think] she is before me . . Has she convinced you? In what a spot Nature has exhausted the profusion of her loveliness. Will you come . . . dearest, best beloved of friends, will you come. Will you share my fortune, enter into my schemes . . . love me as I love you; be inseparable as once I fondly hoped you were . . Yes, all's past, like a dream of the sick man which leaves but bitterness to a fleeting vision.

Ah! how I have loved you. I was even ashamed to tell you how! & now to leave you forever . . . no, not forever. Night comes, . . . Death comes Cold, calm death, almost I would it were to-morrow. There is another life. . . Are you not to be the first there . . . Assuredly.

Dearest, dearest friend, reason with me . . 'I am like a child in weakness . . . Your letters came directly after dinner. How could anyone read them unmoved . . How could I forbear wishing that Death would yawn . . Adieu.

Follow us not. Dare to be good. Dare to be virtuous. Seize once more what once thou didst relinquish, never, never again to resign it.

T. Jefferson Hogg Esqr Mr. Strickland's Blake Street York.
if not there to be forwarded to his present residence. '

LETTER III
(As printed by Hogg)

Keswick, Cumberland.

Your letters are arrived. You did right in anticipating that Richmond was only a resting place, and Keswick is our residence, to which place I wish you could follow us immediately.

I stand alone. I feel that I am nothing : a speck in an universe!

All this is true ; yet have I not been wretched, and was my wretchedness less keen, because it was undeserved? Was it undeserved? What is desert?

Are you not he whom I love, whom I deem capable of exciting the emulation, and attracting the admiration of thousands. I have ever esteemed you as a superior being, and taken you for one who was to give laws to us poor beings, who grovel beneath.

We shall meet again soon ; but I must live some little time, I fear, by myself ; and if my firmness is not sufficient to bear pain without hope of reward, I know that soon we meet again.

Your letters are kind and sincere.

I had no time when I wrote last. If I thought we were to be long parted, I should be wretchedly miserable—half mad! I look on Harriet : she is before me ; she is somewhat better. Has she convinced you that she is?

Oh! what a spot is this! Here nature has exhausted the profusion of her loveliness! Will you come ; will you share my fortunes, enter into my schemes, love me as I love you, be inseparable, as once I fondly hoped we were?

This is not all past, like a dream of the sick man, which leaves but bitterness—a fleeting vision. Oh! how I have loved you! I was even ashamed to tell you how!

And now to leave you for a long time! No ; not for a long time! Night comes ; Death comes! Cold, calm Death. Almost I would it were to-morrow. There is another life—are you not to be the first there? Assuredly, dearest, dearest friend. Reason with me still ; I am like a child in weakness.

Your letters came directly after dinner ;—how could any one read them unmoved? Calm, wise ; you are then with me, and I forbear wishing that Death would yawn.—Adieu!

Cannot you follow us?—why not? But I will dare to be good—dare to be vir-

tuous; and I will soon seize once more what I have for a while relinquished, never, never again to resign it.

LETTER IV
(As written by Shelley)

My dear Friend.

Our letters are delayed terribly . . . two of yours together! the thing is we are not in but near Keswick. You will hear from me tomorrow. I dont know that absence will certainly cure love, but this I know, that presence will terribly augment the passion. I do not know where the woman exists of whom you speak in the latter part of your letter . . . but this will not do. If it merely relates to me, my friend, you were welcome to even this, the dearest . . . but we must not sport with the feelings of others. You will call this perhaps affected, self-deceived disinterestedness—perhaps it is. Believe me till you hear again. I write in Keswick—just as the post is going out.

Your true sincere

Percy B. Shelley.

Pray take care of yr. friend.

T. Jefferson Hogg Esq. Mr. Stricklands Blake Street York

LETTER IV
(As printed by Hogg)

My dear Friend,

Keswick.

Our letters are delayed terribly—two of yours together! The thing is, we are not in, but near, Keswick. You will hear from me to-morrow.

I do not know that absence will certainly cure love; but this I know, that it fearfully augments the intensity of friendship.

I do not know where the passage exists of which you speak in the latter part of your letter. But this will not do; I must look for it.

Believe me yours, till you hear again.

I write in Keswick, just as the post is going out.

Your true, sincere

P. B. Shelley.

Pray, take care of your friend.

LETTER V
(As written by Shelley)

My dear Friend

Chestnut Hill Keswick Cumberland

What you say of my superiority is perfectly erroneous. Consider a little and you will discover this. The great apparent cause of it is my insensibility. Perhaps you are not prepared to boast of yours. You say that you can never cease to love Harriet, yet you assert that you can guarantee your primness. I believe that you think so now, yet all the proof you can afford me is that you do think so now. But how will you guarantee your continuance in this opinion? If six months ago I had asserted that you would thus cause this disturbance, you would not have believed it possible. Your former reasonings may again recur, they may seem to you powerful, irresistible, & what bigot was ever convinced of the fallacy of his religion? I am not jealous, I perfectly understand the beauty of Rousseau's sentiment; yet Harriet is not an Heloise, even were I a St. Preux,—but I am not jealous. . . . Heaven knows that if the possession of Harriet's person, or the attainment of her love was all that intervened between our meeting again to-morrow, willingly would I return to York, ay willingly, to be happy thus to prove my friendship. Jealousy has no place in my bosom; I am indeed at times very much inclined to think the Godwinian plan is best, particularly since the late events. But Harriet does not think so. She is prejudiced; tho' I hope she will not always be so,—and on her opinions of right & wrong alone does the morality of the present case depend. If she was convinced of its innocence, would I be so sottish a slave to opinion as to endeavour to monopolize what if participated would give my friend pleasure without diminishing my own? Oh heavens! my soul is half sick at this terrible world where Nature seems to own no monster in her works but man! They quarrel for straws, they part on these quarrels, and two whose existences seemed entwined separate because—complete the portraiture yourself—Yet this is necessary, abundantly necessary, if Harriet's happiness is otherwise than valueless. If this too be unworthy of my seeking, yon dark rock, whose summit beetles o'er the lake, were a fit spot to take my last adieu of this accursed complication of infatuity [?].

My friend, I ought to set you an example of firmness. What, I? the weakest, most slavish of beings that exists on the earth's face, to you—'Absence extin-

guishes small passions and kindles great ones', but presence without fullest satisfaction will kindle the passions to an inextinguishable flame. How have I heard you talk of the infinite progression of Love. It is strange to me that you, who know the human mind so well, should think so lightly of sensation. If you have loved, I can believe you have not felt it lightly.

Harriet has written to you. What she has said I know not. I have not been able to write for this day or two, owing to having been ill from the poison of laurel leaves. I have now ; your letters of today have arrived. I have read that to Harriett—she shewed it me.

I know how much I owe you. I know all this must appear to you in the light of an injury done you, but it is not my fault, indeed it is not. I will write again to-morrow.

Believe how your letter has affected me

Your real true sincere friend

Will you render Mr. Stricklands bill?

Percy B Shelley

T. Jefferson Hogg Esqr Mr. Stricklands Blake Street York

LETTER V (As printed by Hogg)

My dear Friend,

Chesnut Hill, Keswick.

What you say of my superiority is perfectly erroneous. Consider a little, and you will discover this. The great apparent cause of it is my insensibility ; perhaps you are not prepared to boast of yours : I am sure you are not.

If Harriet's state of health did not intervene between our meeting again immediately, to-morrow willingly would I return to York ; aye, willingly, and be happy thus to prove and to indulge my friendship.

'Absence extinguishes small passions, and kindles great ones.' It is so in love, and so it is with friendship.

My friend, you say I ought always to set you an example of firmness. What! I, the weakest, the most slavish of beings that crawl on the earth's face, to you?

This is a sweet spot! But, oh heavens, my soul is half sick at this terrible world, where nature seems to own no monster in her works, but man. They quarrel for straws ; they part on these quarrels ; and two lovers, whose existences seemed

entwined, separate because—you can complete the portraiture yourself from my history.

Harriet has written to you ; what she has said, I know not. I have not been able to write for a day or two to you, owing to having been ill from the poison of laurel leaves—I have now.

Your letters of to-day have arrived ; I have read that to Harriet ; she showed it me. I know how much I owe you ; I feel it all. Believe me, your letter has delighted and affected me. I will write again to-morrow.

Your real, true, sincere Friend,

Will you send us Mr. S.'s bill?

Percy B. Shelley.

LETTER VI (As written by Shelley)

Chesnut Cottage Cumberland.

We returned to Keswick last night ; all your letters I have found here, which have arrived in my absence. To think of our meeting again were impossible. You must have been long prepared for what I now tell you, that I cannot consent to the destruction of Harriet's peace. The very sight of your letters casts her into her gloom, & anything I ever said to palliate or account for on my suppositions, your line of conduct has constantly made her suspect that love which you must be blinded by self-interest not to allow our material happiness to depend. You must know what you yourself are. Mock modesty can never have concealed from you the fascination which your society spreads. It were impossible to think of the friendship of such a being, & not to say that were worthier of attainment than fame or sensuality or the attachment of all other beings. . . . To give up this must be a sacrifice. . . . how great a one my heart alone can testify. Yet this I now resign. I resign it for Harriet's peace, if you will for my own (tho I think not) I resign it to attain her tranquillity, nor do I think that she requires more than Duty.

If I were free I were yours . . . tho' I don't think you sinless, I think you capable of great things, and in truth as well as in the stores of such a mind as yours can I conceive no pleasure equal to the participation. But I am Harriet's. I am devoted to her happiness ; this is entrusted to me, nor will I resign it. Would you

desire me to desert her and live with you? If you did, I certainly would not, yet this, even this, being necessary to our reunion, I need not say how visionary a prospect that must ever be.

I returned to Keswick yesterday. Your letters in the meantime were not forwarded to me.

Our stay here is so uncertain that I know not one day where we may be the next.

Your real friend P. B. Shelley.

T. Jefferson Hogg Esqr. Mr. Stricklands Blake Street York.

LETTER VI (As printed by Hogg)

Chesnut Cottage, Cumberland.

We returned to Keswick last night. All your letters I have found here, which have arrived in my absence. To think of returning again to York at present is impossible. I could not consent to the injury of Harriet's health—to the destruction of her nerves. You must know what you yourself are. Mock modesty can never have concealed from you the fascination which your society spreads. It were impossible to think of the friendship of such a being, and not to say that were worthier of attainment than fame, or pleasure, or the attachment of all other beings. To give up this, even for a few weeks, must be a sacrifice—how great an one my heart alone can testify. Yet this I now resign for a while. I resign it for Harriet's health; possibly for my own (though I think not). I need only tranquillity.

If I were free, I were unceasingly yours, though I do not think you infallible. I think you capable of great things, and in such, as well as in the stores of such a mind as yours, can I conceive no pleasure equal to the participation.

I returned to Keswick yesterday. Your letters in the meantime were not forwarded to me.

Our stay here is so uncertain, that I know not one day where we may be the next.

Your real Friend,

P. B. Shelley.

The first sheet of the next letter is missing. It will be noticed that the

only passage common both to the original and to Hogg's version, is the final paragraph. It seems probably, therefore, that the first part of the altered version was taken from the missing sheet. Long search for this sheet, though undertaken with the utmost care through all the unpublished Hogg MSS., has proved unavailing.

LETTER VII
(As written by Shelley)

.
possibility of a renewal of this, shall I to gratify your present feelings expose you to the lasting scorpion sting,—expose that bosom every stab of which presses mine to the scorpion remove the hell hound infamy.

What guarantee will you give me that if living with us you never will be passionately in love with Harriet again? None. You can give none. You even wish to give none. Yet further. How can I tell, how can you tell that passion will not urge this love to its extremest consummation, for I do not believe that sensation is something other than terribly strong. How will it not again occur? I demand a proof for these things & You shall then live with us. You can give but one—what? Time! Time flies fast, time long has not fled since he beheld thee the passionate adorer of another.

Consider the changes your opinions have undergone within even the last year—you must not live with us now. Morality demands this sacrifice; your safety, your happiness demands it of me & I submit. So must you; not at my command; not at my word.

You terribly mistook my last letter. It is not, indeed it was not mockery---if you could have read my soul, you would not think so. What must you think of me! Yet even you know not; your mind is a chaos; I can imagine the burning pulses. My heart faints within me. I am wretched, miserable. Adieu, 'tis nine, 'tis ten. Expect to hear tomorrow. I will then answer your letter.

Ever your friend

T. Jeffn. Hogg Esqre. Mrs. Stricklands Blake St. York.

Percy Shelley

Marked with the postage charge, 1s. 4d.

LETTER VII
(As printed by Hogg)

My dear Friend,

Keswick.

I have just finished reading your long letter to Harriet. It is late, or the post is so ; therefore I may not say all I wish ; indeed, that is not possible : words cannot express half my reasonings, the thousandth part of my feelings. Can I not feel ; do we not sympathise ? Cannot I read your soul, as I have read your letter, which I believe I have generally considered to be a copy of the former. My letters have always been, as well as my conversations with you, transcripts of my thoughts.

I did not concert my departure from Richmond, nor that from York. Why did I leave you ? I have never doubted you,—you, the brother of my soul, the object of my vivid interest ; the theme of my impassioned panegyric. But, for the present, Adieu !

It is nine ; it is ten. Expect to hear to-morrow. I will then answer your letter.

Ever your Friend, Percy Shelley.

THE 'WERTER' LETTER

Various points call urgently for discussion before it is possible to enter into a full consideration of this remarkable letter. It will be remembered that Chapter XXIX of Hogg's *Life of Shelley* opens with a long letter, purporting to be a fragment of an unpublished novel by Shelley, lent by the author to Hogg, which the latter had omitted to return to him, and which Hogg found among his papers after the poet's death. It was called 'an epistle from Albert to Werter'.

It has long been suspected that the original letter, far from being a portion of a work of fiction, was a genuine letter of remonstrance from Shelley, written after he had heard from Harriet that Hogg had made love to her during his absence in Sussex.

Roger Ingpen, in his edition of Shelley's Letters, goes as far as to substitute the name of Harriet for that of Charlotte, having, as he said, 'little doubt, as suggested by Mr W. M. Rossetti and others, that it was the letter Shelley wrote when Hogg declared that he would blow out his brains unless he obtained Harriet's forgiveness'.

After many years uncertainty, I am at last able to state definitely and unequivocally that the view of Dowden, Rossetti and Ingpen on this point is correct. The original letter I print below; comparison between it and that which occurs in Chapter XXIX of Hogg's *Life of Shelley* will show that it has undergone but the minimum of alteration: the use of the name Charlotte for Harriet, the alteration of one or two unimportant words, and the deletion of the last paragraph and the two post-scripts, are the sum total. The final portion Hogg inserted in Chapter XIV of his book, as a separate letter.

The letter is undated save by the word 'Thursday'. It seems certain that it could not have been written later than 15th December, the date of Shelley's letter to Miss Hitchener, in which he refers to 'a letter in which I strongly insisted on the criminality of exposing himself to the inroads of a passion which he had proved himself unequal to control',—obviously this letter. Equally, it could not have been written earlier than a few days before the 15th. The only date that will fit is Thursday, 12th December, to which date I would therefore ascribe it.

LETTER VIII (As written by Shelley)

Keswick

You deceive yourself terribly my friend. It is another source of proof to me that you should have written to Harriet as you have . . . It convinces me at the same time of your real sincerity, great self-deceived, continued vehemence of passion which borrows respect deference from distance. It convinces me more forcibly than ever how unfit it is that you should live with us, it convinces me that I by permitting it should act a subservient part, in the promotion of yours and [Harriet's] misery. I am more & more convinced that from a connection such as this, even intellectual, nothing but misery can arise, your passions impose upon your reason if this is not evident to your apprehension. I either actually do, or merely affect to put self out of the question; this we will not discuss; if certain effects follow the consideration of causes must be useless labor.—You say you fear that you

have lost my good opinion. 'Good opinion' is very comprehensive, certainly I no longer estimate your powers of resisting passion so highly as once I did. Certainly I no longer consider your reason as superior to the sophistry of feeling as once it was.—How can I . . . to what have you yielded! How terrible, how complete has been the perversion of that reason I once almost fancied omnipotent.—I admit the distinction which you make between mistake & crime, I heartily acquit you of the latter, but how terrible has been your mistake. Even now does it continue.—You never could think it virtue to act as you desired, you might indeed have been so far imposed upon by feeling as to imagine that Virtue did not forbid it . . . I said I thought you were insincere? true I do not wonder that you shudder at the accusation, it appears to me perfectly natural, that you should at the same time be disguising veiling palliating you should think yourself the pattern of disinterestedness which once you were, which once I hope again to behold you—I said you were insincere? I said so because I thought so. I still think so, but you imposed upon by feeling the contamination of falsehood is far far from you —. — One expression in your long letter, (the letter of your soul) convinces me that you are still enthralled by feeling.—it is merely an instance—'I must, I will convince you &c.' I must or—the alternative is terrible, but decided . . You shall believe &c. or when too late you shall feel.' This gives me pain, this proves to me that so far from being now under the guidance of reason, you wish to enforce my belief in you by an act which itself is adequate to the excitement of any belief but that of your selfishness, or to revenge my want of it by this very act which you know would embitter my existence.—Else what means 'You shall feel when too late' . . . This my friend is not convincing, it might be enough (supposing I thought you remained in the state of mind which dictated that) to make me say I believe in you, but not to make me believe in you—What will then make me again believe you to be what you were—simply to resume that character which once gained the credence whose loss you complain of. Think, reason, methodize. Your present incapacity for all these my conviction that your exposure to Harriet's attractions would augment that incapacity, are the limits of the change of my opinion regarding you—It appears to me that I am acting as your friend, your disinterested friend by objecting to your living with us at present; certainly I am depriving myself of the very great pleasure of your society; this however is necessary, to this I submit. You mention in your letter to Harriet

- your obligation to me for introducing you to her. Certainly if I deserve any disservice at your hands, it is for unwittingly exposing you to the temptation & consequent misery of this very intercourse. Here again I see that feeling peeping out which would destroy our hopes again—Think not that I am otherwise than your friend, a friend to you now more fervent more devoted than ever, for misery endears to us those whom we love; You are you shall be my bosom friend you have been so—but in one instance, & there you have deceived yourself. Still let us continue what ever we have been. I will remain unchanged so shall you hereafter. Let us forget this affair, let us erase from the memory that ever it had being. Consider what havoc one year, the last year of our lives, has made in Memory. How, can you say then that good will not come, that we shall not again be what we were; good and evil are in an ever varying routine of change, if I am wretched this month the arising of another may see me happy——. You will say perhaps that it is well for me to reason; I am cold, phlegmatic, unfeeling that I compromise for those sins which I love, by railing against those which are matters of indifference—In the first part of this charge there may be some truth, I have more than once felt the force of this,---Is constitutional temperament the criterion of moral? Believe me that this more than excuses to me the present irrationality, incongruity inconsistency of your words & actions; I cannot avoid however seeing that they are incongruous nor seeing it avoid earnestly desiring that they may be otherwise.—Prove to me satisfactorily that Virtue exists not, that it is a fabric as baseless as a school-boy's vision. then take life . . I will no more with it. I would not consent to live to breathe to vegetate, if this vegetation simply went on to imbibe for no other end than it's own proper nutriment the juices which surrounded it. - Does the vegetable reason as to the good it does to the air when it absorbs azote, does the panther destroy the antelope for the public good, does the lion love the lioness for his sake or her own. Prove that Man too is necessarily this; my last act may be an act of this very selfishness but it would be an act of precluding the possibility of more of it, or I would leave the world to such as could bear to inhabit it's surface. Prove this, & I will say you have acted wisely. The argument concerning morality mentioned in my last was intended for this.—But tho' I think you insincere, (tho without being conscious of it) I do not think that this is your opinion now: yet stay . . what did I remark in your letter to Harriet? it proves at the same time the sincerity undisguisedness of your

passions yet the insincerity which I have remarked as secretly betraying you . . . You talk of female excellence, female perfection. Man is in your declamation a being infinitely inferior whose proudest efforts at virtue are but mockeries of his impotence . . . Harriet is the personification of all this contrast to man, the impassionateness of the most ardent passion that ever burned in human breast could never have dictated a compliment (I will not say a piece of flattery) more excessive—she perused it (for she has shewn me your letter) & remarked with much indignation on the repetition of that continued flattery which you had made your theme ever since she knew you.—I wish you would investigate the sources of this passion, my dear friend,—you would find it derived it's principal source from sensation—Let your 'too too great susceptibility of beauty' your very own sincere expression in your letter to Harriet, suffice to convince you of the true state of your feelings.—This caused your error primarily. nor can I wonder; I do not condemn I pity; nor do I pity with contempt, but with sympathy, real sympathy.—I hope I have shewn you that. I do not regard you as a smooth tongued traitor. Would I choose such for a friend, would I still love him with affectionate unabated, perhaps increased.—Reason plain reason would tell you this could not be. How far gone must you have been in Sophistry self-deception, to think sensation in this is any instance laudible. I am not happy. I tell you so. My last letter, was written in the acuteness of feeling . . . but do you wish that I should be happy? Reassure yourself, & then be assured that not a wish of my heart will remain ungratified as respects you. I have but one other wish beside. to that at present I will not allude more—Adieu my dear friend. Harriet will write to you tomorrow. May I require that as one proof of self conquest, you will throw the letter into the fire, suppressing all thoughts of adoration which I strongly suspect to arise from mere sensation, sentiment. But the letter will arrive first? it will be prest to the lips, it will be folded to the heart. Imagination will dwell upon the hand that wrote it—how easy the transition to the wildest reveries of ungratified desire! Oh! how the sophistry of the passions has changed you, the sport of a womans whim; the plaything of her inconsistencies, the bauble with which she is angry, the footstool of her exaltation. Assert yourself be what you were Love Adore! It will exalt your nature, bid you a Man be a God. Combine it if you will with sensation perhaps they are inseperable. be it so. but do not love one who cannot return it, who if

she could ought to stifle her desire to do so—Love is not a whirlwind that it is unvanquishable. Adieu, my dear friend adieu.

Ever Ever yours I hope with sincerity Percy Shelley.
We live at Keswick . . do not come here but write—you may send my Trunk—open all my letters that come to York.

[Written across the edge] I have obeyed what you say in your letter of to-day—I have not told you that I am miserable—Indeed I cannot be so miserable as I was when I wrote those letters—If you were to see me now you would see me very calm, as I hope you are. The letter of your soul has been my companion, my study since I received it. Adieu. Be Happy.

[Written on the flap] Do not come now.
T. Jefferson Hogg Esqr Mr. Strickland's Blake Street York
Thursday

The letter is written on both sides of each of three folio sheets, and marked across the address with the cost of the postage, 1s. 7d.

The conclusion of this long letter was printed separately by Hogg, among the rest of Shelley's letters written from Keswick at this time. It has undergone practically no alteration, save that the words 'Do not come now', which were written on the flap of the letter, evidently as an after-thought, were not unnaturally omitted.

This portion of the letter, as Hogg printed it (*Life of Shelley*, Vol. II, p. 22), reads as follows:

LETTER VIII
(as printed by Hogg)

My dear Friend, Keswick, Thursday.
We live now at Keswick. You do not come to us ; but pray, write. You may send my trunk. Open all my letters that come to York.

I have obeyed what you say in your letter of to-day : I have not told you that I am miserable ; indeed I cannot be so miserable as I was when I wrote those letters. If you were to see me now, you would see me very calm ; as I am sure you are. Your

long letter of advice has been my companion, my study, since I received it.

Adieu! Be happy! My dear friend, adieu!

Ever yours, with sincerity,

Percy Shelley.

In the post-script to the 'Werther' letter, where Shelley writes, 'Indeed, I cannot be so miserable as I was when I wrote those letters', he is obviously referring to letter VII, in which he says, 'I am wretched, miserable'.

As an appendix to the foregoing letters, I give the correct versions of two letters concerning Harriet, which were printed by Hogg with certain alterations.

They will perhaps serve to show the terms upon which Shelley and Harriet were with Hogg, in the early summer of 1813.

LETTER IX

Dear Sir.

35 Great Cuffe St Dublin May 3d 1813

I take the liberty of troubling you with these few lines to be informed by you how our good friends the Shelleys are, from whom I have heard but once since they left this country. I did flatter myself with a letter from my friend long before this, and now begin to apprehend some serious cause for his not writing. I hope no such cause has interposed, and if not you will much oblige me by telling him how anxious both Mrs. Lawless & I are to hear from him & Mrs. Shelley. I suppose Miss Westbrook has long since arrived with you.

I remain Your very humble servant

John Lawless.

Jefferson Hogg Esq. No. 70 Chancery Lane London

Sealed in red wax, and marked with the postal charge, 1s. 2d.

[On the reverse] *I am very sorry that Bysshe is unwell. It is hard that his heart should be so good & his head so bad. I wish you had as much influence with the latter as over the former. Lawless has had the impudence to send me the paper on which I write. I met Mr. & Mrs. Newton as I returned last night; they ordered*

me to tell you that they would take tea with you tonight. Adieu —au grand Dieu, quoique tu n'es qu'une jolie petite dècse.

Jefferson

Sunday Mornng.

Mrs. Shelley Cooke's Hotel Albemarle Street Piccadilly.

[Written on the flap, in Harriet's hand.] *Bysshe is better now & wishes for your company at 8 oclock to meet the Newtons.*

Sealed in red wax with the Hogg crest.

It is amusing to notice that Hogg, in publishing this letter, has changed the word 'impudence' to 'goodness'! Lawless' letter has been left unchanged, as also has Harriet's endorsement, save for the fact that she did not sign it. In his copy of his own letter, however, Hogg has added a beginning, 'Dearest Harriet', which in fact he did not write, and has changed his signature 'Jefferson' to 'T.J.H.', as well as adding the sentence 'Bysshe will answer him'. He also omitted his pretty little compliment at the end.

In the following letter, Hogg makes an interesting alteration in the version of it which he published in his *Life of Shelley*, transposing the personal pronouns.

The important sentence, as printed by Hogg, reads thus: 'I only desire that I were always as anxious to confer on you all possible happiness, as she is.' Shelley really wrote as follows:

LETTER X
(as written by Shelley)

My dearest Friend.

I have felt myself extremely hurt by Harriet's conduct towards you. [This line afterwards deleted, presumably by Shelley.]

She writes in this. I only desire that she were as anxious to confer on you all

possible happiness as I am. She tells you that she invites you this evening. It will be better than our lonesome and melancholy interviews.

Your very affectionate P B Shelley

I am very sure that Harriet will be as kind as ever. I could see when I spoke to her (if my eyes were not blinded by love) that it was an error not of the feelings but of reason. I entreat you to come this evening.

Cooke's Hotel Wednesday Mor.

Jefferson Hogg Esqr 70 Chancery Lane Holborn

Sealed in green wax.

[Written across flap] I send this by the servant that there may be no delay.

LETTER X
(as printed by Hogg)

My dearest Friend,

Harriet writes in this. I only desire that I were always as anxious to confer on you all possible happiness, as she is. She tells you that she invites you this evening. It will be better than our lonesome and melancholy interviews.

Your very affectionate, P. B. Shelley.

I am very sure that Harriet will be as kind as ever. I could see, when I spoke to her (if my eyes were not blinded by love), that it was an error, not of the feelings, but of reason. I send this by the servant, that there may be no delay.

Cooke's Hotel, Wednesday morn (June, 1813).

I suggest that the following lyric is by T. J. Hogg, and was written to Harriet. It is obvious that a dactyl is required to fill the missing space, a space which is filled perfectly by the word 'Harriet'.

It is in Hogg's hand, and the fact that I have been unable to trace the verses, even in the British Museum's list of first lines of verses of this period, makes it reasonably certain that they are not a transcript of someone else's work, but are in fact Hogg's own composition.

The 'Gothicism' of the first stanza is in line with that which enraptured both Hogg and Shelley in their early years, the years of 'Alexy', 'Zastrozzi' and 'St Irvyne'.

It seems probable, from the fact that Hogg undoubtedly addressed some verses to Elizabeth Shelley, that he would not have neglected to do the same to Harriet.

Unfortunately the folio sheet upon which the verses are written, is torn across the centre, and consequently the date of the watermark is missing, but as they were kept in a bundle of similar sheets, water-marked 1810, it seems quite probable that they were written not later than the following year.

*Why, when dark night her mantle spreads,
When weary mortals rest their heads,
Why do you watchful bless each hour,
Which sounding from the Gothic tower
Divides the night, & loudly tells
The time that's past on deep-ton'd bells?
Because it says the hour draws near,
When I shall, blest, behold the dear,
The lovely* -

*Why, when your mind from classic page
Extracts the wisdom of each age;
When Poesy's bewitching power
Detains you in some silent bower;
When tales of blood your breast inflame,
Or Pity ask --- 'Why do you blame
Time's tardy pace, speak, tell me true?'
Because I burn, I burn to view
The lovely* - ---

*When the wine blushes in the glass,
In mirth the festive moments pass;
When youthful joys the heart entwine,
When friendship borrows charms from wine;*

*When in such joys the moments flow,
Why do you chide as too, too slow
The course of time -- —? The hours to fly
I bid, until I meet the eye*

Of lovely ———

*Why, when your heaven-enraptured soul
Quaffs Syren, music's magic bowl;
Why, when the pealing organ's sound
Pours solemn transport all around?
Say, when the harp with trembling chords
Celestial harmony affords,
Why do you bid the moments haste?
Because I fain the smiles wd taste*

Of lovely ———

*Say, why from flattery's soothing tongue,
(Skilled to ensnare the heart yet young,)
Why from the warm delusive lip
From wch you pleasure often sip!
Why, why refuse to be carest
Where from the panting, willing breast
Where wd you fly, ah foolish boy?
I fly to find the queen of joy,*

The lovely ———

*For she can lull my soul to rest,
Sharp wit, pure sense reign in her breast.
Her smile as wine the heart makes wild.
Her voice is music's best lov'd child.
Sincerity lends ——— grace,
Sincerity beams in her face.
Wit, soft repose, wine's gay delight,
With wisdom, music, love, unite*

In lovely ———

CHAPTER II: THE 'BRACKNELL' LETTER

*A singer who, if errors blurred
His sight, had yet a spirit stirred
By vast desire.*

William Watson, *Shelley's Centenary*.

IN MY BOOK, *THE ATHENIANS*, THE PREVIOUS VOLUME IN this series, I published what I believed to be a complete letter from Shelley to Hogg, written from his lodgings in St Pancras on 3rd October, 1814, shortly after his return from the short trip to the Continent, on which he was accompanied by Mary Godwin and Claire Clairmont.

I have now been given access to the second sheet of this letter, which had been separated from the former for many years, and, since it has never before been published, I print the whole of the letter below.

Apart from the interest that is naturally felt in such a clear statement that Shelley had definitely foregone all feeling that Harriet was still his wife, it is interesting to compare this letter, hitherto unknown, with that which Shelley wrote to Harriet the same day, a copy of which has recently been found and published by Leslie Hotson (*Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet*, Faber, 1930).

In this letter Shelley writes: 'I am united to another; you are no longer my wife.'

Note that in the same letter Shelley says also: 'I wish that you could see Mary . . . I murmur not if you feel incapable of compassion and love for the object and the sharer of my passion.'

In his letter to Hogg, he says: 'I believed that one revolting duty yet remained, to continue to deceive my wife.' That he *did* try to deceive her, with all his heart, is very evident from his letter to her: 'I repeat (and believe me, for I am sincere) that my attachment to you is unimpaired.'

As Mr Jeaffreson points out, there is 'a conflict of opinion between the authorities as to the particular year in which Shelley paid his last visit to Field Place: for whilst Hogg represents the visit to have been

made in the early summer of 1814, Lady Shelley is no less certain that it was an affair of the late summer of 1813'. This letter makes it perfectly clear that Hogg was correct. The visit to Horsham was paid while Shelley was at Bracknell, that is, in April of 1814, almost immediately after the ceremony of re-marriage to Harriet.

Further, Shelley seems to suggest that he felt (as one would naturally expect) that his re-marriage to Harriet was the last and final straw under which his back broke. It is beyond question that it is to that re-marriage that he refers, when he writes 'I had resigned all prospects of utility or happiness to the single purpose of cultivating Harriet', and calls the feeling of duty which led him to take the step of marrying her again according to the rites of the Church of England, a 'gross & despicable superstition'.

Lady Shelley (whose dates are no more to be relied on than her facts), writes: 'During this summer (1813), Shelley paid a visit to Field Place. . . . his reception there is graphically told by a friend of the family (Captain Kennedy), who was then staying in the house:--"At this time he (Shelley) resided somewhere in the country with his first wife and their only child, Ianthe. He walked from his house until within a very few miles of Field Place, when a farmer gave him a seat in his travelling cart."'

Lady Shelley adds, 'Towards the close of 1813, estrangements, which for some time had been slowly growing between Mr. and Mrs. Shelley, came to a crisis. Separation ensued.' Additional proof that Shelley's visit to Field Place occurred in 1814, and not in the previous year, is afforded by the fact that Shelley was already separated from Harriet at the time, and, as he said in this letter, 'had even proceeded so far as to compose a letter to Harriet on the subject of his passion for another.' Even Shelley would hardly write a letter to the wife who was staying in the same house with him at the time.

Furthermore, this letter but adds to the already overwhelming burden of proof that his infatuation for Mary did not in the least contribute to the separation from Harriet, for at the time he had not fallen in love with Mary.

LETTER XI

5 Church Terrace Pancrass London

My dear Friend,

October 3. 1814.

After a silence of some months I hasten to communicate to you the events of the interval. They will surprise, & if any degree of our ancient affection is yet cherished by you for a being apparently so inconsistent & indisciplinable as me, will probably delight you. You will rejoice that after struggles & privation which almost withered me to idiotism, I enjoy an happiness the most perfect & exalted that it is possible for my nature to participate. That I am restored to energy and enterprise, that I have become again what I once promised to become . . . that my friendship will no longer be an enigma to my friend, you will rejoice . . . If the causes that produced my errors have not made you indifferent to this reformation, & my restoration to peace, liberty & virtue.

As soon as I returned from the Continent (for I have travelled thro' France, Switzerland, Germany & Holland) I sought you to communicate what I will now detail.

In the beginning of Spring, I spent two months at Mrs Boinville's without my wife. If I except the succeeding period these two months were probably the happiest of my life: the calmest, the serenest, the most free from care. The contemplation of female excellence is the favorite food of my imagination. There was ample scope for admiration: novelty added a peculiar charm to the intrinsic merit of the objects: I had been unaccustomed to the mildness, the intelligence, the delicacy of a cultivated female. The presence of Mrs Boinville & her daughter afforded a strange contrast to my former friendship & deplorable condition. I suddenly perceived that the entire devotion with which I had resigned all prospects of utility or happiness to the single purpose of cultivating Harriet was a gross & despicable superstition. Perhaps every degree of affectionate intimacy with a female, however slight, partakes of the nature of love. Love makes men quick-sighted, & is only called blind by the [illegible] because he perceives the existence of relations invisible to grosser spirits. I saw the full extent of the calamity which my rash & heartless union with Harriet: an union over whose entrance might justly be inscribed

'Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate!'

had produced. I felt as if a dead & living body had been linked together in loathsome & horrible communion. It was no longer possible to practise self-deception : I believed that one revolting duty yet remained, to continue to deceive my wife. I wandered in the fields alone. The season was most beautiful. The evenings were so serene & mild. I never had before felt so intensely the subduing voluptuousness of the impulses of spring. Manifestation of my approaching change tinged my waking thoughts, & afforded inexhaustible subject for the visions of my sleep. I recollect that one day I undertook to walk from Bracknell to my father's, (40 miles). A train of visionary events arranged themselves in my imagination until ideas almost acquired the intensity of sensations. Already I had met the female, who was destined to be mine, already had replied to my exulting recognition, already were the difficulties surmounted that opposed an entire union. I had even proceeded so far as to compose a letter to Harriet on the subject of my passion for another. Thus was my walk beguiled, at the conclusion of which I was hardly sensible of fatigue.

In the month of June I came to London to accomplish some business with Godwin that had been long depending. The circumstances of the case required an almost constant residence at his house. There I met his daughter Mary. The originality & loveliness of Mary's character was apparent to me from her very motions & tones of voice. The irresistible wildness & sublimity of her feelings shewed itself in her gestures & her looks—Her smile, how persuasive it was, & how pathetic! She is gentle, to be convinced & tender ; yet not incapable of ardent indignation & hatred. I do not think that there is an excellence at which human nature can arrive, that she does not indisputably possess, or of which her character does not afford manifest intimations. I speak thus of Mary now . . . and so intimately are our natures now united, that I feel whilst I describe her excellencies as if I were an egoist exulting upon his own perfections. Then, how deeply did I not feel my inferiority, how willingly confess myself far surpassed in originality, in genuine elevation & magnificence of the intellectual nature until she consented to share her capabilities with me. I speedily conceived an ardent passion to possess this inestimable treasure. In my own mind this feeling assumed a variety of shapes, I disguised from myself the true nature of my affection. I endeavoured also to conceal it from Mary, but without success. I was vacillating & infirm of purpose. I shuddered to transgress a real duty, & could not in this instance perceive the

boundaries by which virtue was separated from madness, when self devotion becomes the very prodigality of idiotism. Her understanding was made clear by a spirit that sees into the truth of things, my affections preserved pure & sacred from the corrupting contamination of vulgar superstitions. No expressions can convey the remotest conception of the manner in which she dispelled my delusions. The sublimer & rapturous moment when she confessed herself mine, who had so long been hers in secret, cannot be painted to mortal imaginations.—Let it suffice to you, who are my friend, to know & to rejoice that she is mine : that at length I possess the inalienable treasure, that I sought & I have found.

Tho' strictly watched, & regarded with a suspicious eye, opportunities of frequent intercourse were not wanting. When we meet, I will give you a more explicit detail of the progress of our intercourse. How Godwin's distress induced us to prolong the period of our departure. How the cruelty & injustice with which we were treated, compelled us to disregard all consideration but that of the happiness of each other. We left England & proceeded to Switzerland & returned thro Germany & Holland. Two months have passed since this new state of being content. How wonderfully I am changed! Not a disembodied spirit can have undergone a stranger revolution! I never knew until now that contentment was anything but a word denoting an amusing abstraction. I never before felt the integrity of my nature, its various dependencies, & learned to consider myself as an whole accurately united—rather than an assemblage of inconsistent & discordant portions.

Above all, most sensibly do I perceive the truth of my entire worthlessness but as depending on another. And I am deeply persuaded that thus ennobled, I shall become a more true & constant friend, a more useful lover of mankind, a more ardent asserter of truth & virtue . . . above all more consistent, more intelligible, more true.

My dear friend I entreat you to write to me soon. Even in this pure & celestial felicity I am not contented until I hear from you.

Most affectionately yours P. B. Shelley.

Thos Jefferson Hogg Esqr Junr Norton near Stockton on Lees Durham

CHAPTER III: MARY AND ALEXY

MARY'S JOURNAL FOR THE EARLY PART OF 1815 gives not the slightest sign that she was in any way the victim of a 'grande passion' for Hogg. Week by week she evinces evident signs that the mild dislike with which she had at first regarded him was passing away, and she unquestionably became fond of him, appreciating his remarkable kindness and generosity, and appealing to him for practical assistance at such times as Shelley showed himself totally incapable of giving it, as for instance after the birth of her baby. As far as her Journal is concerned, however, there is no evidence of any warmer feeling for Hogg.

Her real feelings seem to have been mixed; compounded in part of genuine liking for him as a person of similar views and outlook on life; in part of appreciation of his kindness and generosity of character; and in part because she had such deep affection for her husband that she felt justified in using any and all means to procure for him the assistance which he needed. This latter trait was a natural inheritance from Godwin, who felt quite sincerely that he had a moral right to whatever he might need, and did not greatly care how doubtful were the means he employed to bring about the satisfaction of his requirements.

To what then can we ascribe the tone of these letters to Hogg? To jealousy. Claire Clairmont, daughter by her first husband of Godwin's second wife, was at this time making her home with Mary and Shelley, and whether or no it was the case that Shelley was much attracted by her, Mary was certainly afraid that he might become so. She was in consequence intensely jealous of Claire, even going so far as to say, towards the end of her life, that Claire had been the bane of her existence ever since she was six years old. This jealousy, I would suggest, was the chief cause of the tone of the letters which she wrote to Hogg at this time.

As to Hogg, he was but a boy, after all; he and Shelley, in their community of interests, had long since convinced themselves that whatever they had, they had in common; and though he may have been attracted to Mary (and doubtless he was, for she was a pretty and attractive girl),

he certainly never intended that his feelings should get the better of him, or that his affection should show itself more than in words; and in fact it never did.

His outlook on life, even at this early age, was cynical: he conceived himself as it were a visitor at the Zoo, looking at the animals in the monkey-house, entering perhaps into their games and romps with a certain amount of zest, but always conscious that he was really outside the bars, and though with them, yet not of them.

This view is quite obvious in his *Life of Shelley*, written in maturer years. Looking back on the days of his youth, he saw Shelley as the 'divine poet' certainly, but he also saw him as the very peculiar and strange being, whom it is hardly incorrect to term 'unbalanced'. The 'Mad Shelley' of Eton days, the 'strange fellow' of Oxford, intimate friend and companion of several years, could not be considered solely as the quasi-divinity whom his son and daughter-in-law desired should be the idol before whom Hogg (and through his book, the whole world) should bow down and worship. Hogg saw much too clearly for that: Shelley, his friend, was to him what he was, neither more nor less; a genius and a crank; of brilliance unutterable, yet at times unutterably stupid; of the clearest perceptions, yet sometimes little removed from a madman;—but always his dearly-loved friend.

Referring to Hogg's visits between January and March, 1815, Miss Glynn Grylls (*Mary Shelley: A Biography*, 1941, pp. 47, 48) writes: 'These visits of Hogg's, which had grown more and more frequent, were not as altruistic as might be imagined, for correspondence . . . has revealed that he came in order to make love to Mary as he had made love to Harriet and as he was to enter later into a still more intimate relationship with another woman of Shelley's finding.' (This refers of course, to Jane Williams, afterwards Mrs Jefferson Hogg.) 'Mary's reaction to his proposal presents a psychological problem to which "Political Justice" rather than Passion must provide a clue, for her letters show that she was not particularly attracted by Hogg, but conscientiously willing to take a lover for the sake of Free Love in the abstract.'

This is surely totally incorrect; there was no question of her love for

Hogg, nor of his love for her, in any ordinary sense of the word 'love'; Hogg's use of the word was purely that of 'Political Justice'—so far the judgment is true—but he certainly never came 'to make love to Mary'; Mary was unquestionably anxious to get money out of Hogg, and was offering a somewhat valueless 'quid' for a solid financial 'quo',—a bargain of which Hogg never took the smallest advantage—giving help where he could solely for the sake of friendship, and for no ulterior motive whatever.

Unquestionably they had what nowadays would be considered a mild flirtation, but it is past question that he was no hunter pursuing a flying nymph; the only object of his pursuit at this time was love itself—natural enough in the circumstances of his age and temperament.

In printing the ensuing letters for the first time, there is a great temptation to leave them 'without comment'. At first sight they would seem to speak for themselves; but whether in so speaking, they would speak truth, seems doubtful. Assuredly the impression first gained from their perusal is that of a real 'affaire'. That must be admitted; yet it does not coincide with what the rest of Mary's life leads us to expect.

In her *Memorials*, Lady Shelley gives the reader to understand that Mary had been brought up in the principles of her father's doctrine of Free Contract. Having regard to her frequent inaccuracy of statement, however, one need not accept this one at its face value, especially since Godwin had repudiated his early views, both in writing and by his actions, before the birth of his daughter. Although these letters might seem to lend colour to such an idea, the fact that Godwin no longer held such doctrines during Mary's childhood, together with the fact that she was no more than a child (albeit singularly precocious) at the time of her first meeting with her future husband, makes it in the highest degree unlikely that the doctrine of Free Contract entered into her own scheme of life. She was, moreover, too deeply in love with Shelley for her to wish to adopt her father's early views.

That Shelley still held such opinions, however, is clear; and nothing is more probable than that Mary was influenced by her adoration of him to accept his ill-digested views of life as rather more than gospel. Shel-

ley's view on marriage, expressed with vigour to Hogg at the time when the idea of elopement with Harriet was seriously being considered, did not alter greatly with the passage of time. In a letter to Hogg written at the Westbrooks' house on 12th May, 1811, just three months before his marriage to Harriet, Shelley says, 'Yes, marriage is hateful, detestable. A kind of ineffable, sickening disgust seizes my mind when I think of this most despotic, most unrequired fetter which prejudice has forged to confine its energies'. It is obvious that the first qualification for those desiring to practise free contract was not lacking; a detestation of the unbreakable '*vinculum matrimonii*'. That the second qualification, that of common ownership, was also present, is evidenced in two passages from his letters. The first (in a letter to Hogg from Keswick, q.v., p. 15) is as follows: 'I attach little value to the monopoly of exclusive cohabitation. You know that frequently I have spoken slightly of it . . . this *I* would not value. Were this to have been yielded to you . . . suppose not that I would have refused you what I too might share.' That is surely sufficiently frank! The second passage (from the note left by Shelley in Hogg's chambers in the Temple early in the morning of 27th April, 1815, q.v., p. 56) can hardly bear any other interpretation than the obvious one: 'I shall be very happy to see you again, & to give you your share of our common treasure of which you have been cheated for several days. The Maie knows how highly you prize this exquisite possession, & takes occasion to quiz you in saying that it is necessary for me to absent from London, from your sensibility to its value.'

As I said above, I prefer to leave these letters without further comment, save to point to the remark made by Mary many years afterwards, in a letter (see p. 59) which she wrote to Hogg the year after Shelley's death: 'Although our connection was marked by storms, & circumstances led me often into erroneous conduct with regard to you, yet now bereft of all, I willingly turn to my Shelley's earliest friend, & to one whom I am persuaded, notwithstanding all, thinks kindly of me.'

LETTER XII

My dear friend

Mary wished to speak with you alone, for which purpose I have gone out & removed [her, afterwards deleted] Clare.

If you should return before this evening & are at leisure I need not direct your steps.

Affectionately yours P B S

T. Jefferson Hogg Esq.

LETTER XIII

January — — 1815 [Post-marked Jan. 1.]

Dearest Hogg

As they have both left me and I am here all alone, I have nothing better to do than take up my pen and say a few words to you—as I do not expect you this morning.

You love me, you say—I think I could return it with the passion you deserve—but you are very good to me and tell me that you are quite happy with the affection which from the bottom of my heart I feel for you—you are so generous, so disinterested, that no one can help loving you. But, you know, Hogg, that we have known each other for so short a time, and I did not think about love, so that I think that that also will come in time & then we shall be happier, I do think, than the angels who sing for ever & ever, the lovers of Jane's world of perfection. There is a bright prospect before us, my dear friend—lovely—and—which renders it certain—wholly dependent on our own selves—for Shelley & myself I need promise nothing—not to you either, for I know that you are persuaded that I will use every effort to promote your happiness, & such is my affection for you, that will be no hard task.

But this is prattle—I tell you what you know so well already—besides you will be here this evening. The sun shines; it would be a fine day to visit the divine Theocla but I am not well enough. I was in great pain all night & this morning, & am but just getting better

You need not answer this scrawl.

Affectionately your Mary

Thomas Jefferson Hogg Esq. Arundel Street Strand

LETTER XIV

January 1815 Nelson Square [Probably Jan. 4?]

My dearest Hogg

I have been trifling away my time thinking it early when to my infinite astonishment I learn that it is past two. It is useless to think of going to Theoclea to-day, but tomorrow will do as well.

Shelley & Jane are both gone out & from the number & distance of the places that they are going to I do not expect them till very late. Perhaps you can come and console a solitary lady in the mean time—but I do not wish to make you a truant so do not come against your conscience.

You are so good & disinterested a creature that I love you more & more.

By the bye when Shelley is in the country we shall never be alone so perhaps this is the last opportunity for a long time, but still I do not wish to persuade you to do that which you ought not.

With one kiss Goodbye Affectionately yours Mary

If you cannot come now perhaps you can come earlier this evening than usual.

T. J. Hogg, Esq. – Holroyd Esq. Gray's Inn.

In much of her correspondence with Shelley, as well as in her Journal, Mary refers to herself by the name of Maie. In her letters to Hogg, she frequently addressed him as 'Alexy'. This refers to his novel, *The Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff*, of which Shelley wrote an enthusiastic notice in *The Critical Review*. On page 83 of this novel occur the words, 'I was no longer a mortal: I was the fabled Mercury: the commingled blood of Jove and Maia beat in every pulse'. Mary at this time had just been reading the book, which accounts for the nickname she gave Hogg, and possibly for her use of a new name for herself, instead of her customary pet-names of 'Pecksie' and 'the Dormouse'.

In her Journal for 5th January Mary writes, 'Go to breakfast at Hogg's; Shelley leaves us there and goes to Hume's. When he returns we go to Newman Street; see the statue of Theoclea; it is a divinity that raises your mind to all virtue and excellence; I never beheld anything half so wonderfully beautiful'.

This statue was still on view on 6th January, as Mary wrote that day to Hogg from Mrs Peacock's, asking him to accompany her to see Theoclea again. It was evidently withdrawn from exhibition on 7th January.

I have been unable to find out any details as to this statue, which must have been on view in London for some considerable time. The only suggestion I can make is that it may have been a work ascribed to Theocles, and therefore popularly known as Theoclea, but I can give no certain information about it.

LETTER XV

[No date, but written 6th January, 1815]

Dear Alexy

43 Southampton Buildings

Will you come with me to Theoclea—I wait here at Mrs. Peacock's for your answer. By an advertisement in the paper we learn that this & tomorrow are the last days—will you not see that lovely creature again?

Yours very truly Mary.

I only ask you for the pleasure of your company, not because I want someone to go with me, so you refuse if you are busy.

Mr. Hogg Mr. Holroid Grays Inn.

In Mary's Journal for the same day, she wrote, 'Walk to Mrs. Peacock's with Clara. Walk with Hogg to Theoclea; she is ten thousand times more beautiful than ever; tear ourselves away'.

Enclosed in the following letter is still a lock of Mary's hair, of a beautiful rich golden-chestnut colour, wrapped up in a small square of paper bearing the words 'To Alexy from his affectionate Mary'.

The physical cause to which she refers is her pregnancy; her daughter was born the following month, a seven-months' child.

Mary's remark, 'I ask but for time', must, I presume, mean that she was prepared to share marital relations between her husband and Hogg, in accordance with her father's often-expressed views. We have no proof whatever that Hogg either desired or received such an extreme token of affection.

LETTER XVI

Dearest Hogg

I send you what you asked me for. I sincerely believe that we shall all be so happy! My affection for you, although it is not now exactly as you would wish, will I think daily become more so—then, what can you have to add to your happiness. I ask but for time, time which for other causes beside this—physical causes—that must be given—Shelley will be subject to these also, & this, dear Hogg, will give time for that love to spring up which you deserve and will one day have. All this you know is sweet hope, but we need not be prudent now, for I will try to make you happy & you say it is in my power.

Jan. 7th. 1815

Most affectionately yours Mary.

F. Jefferson Hogg Esq. 34 Arundel Street Strand

LETTER XVII

[Post-marked 7 o'clock, 24th January, 1815] Monday morning.

When you return to your lodging this evening, dearest Alexy, I hope it will cheer your solitude to find this letter from me, that you may read & kiss before you go to sleep.

My own Alexy, I know how much & how tenderly you love me, and I rejoice to think that I am capable of constituting your happiness. We look forward to joy & delight in the summer when the trees are green, when the suns brightly & joyfully when, dearest Hogg, I have my little baby, with what exquisite pleasure shall we pass the time. You are to teach me Italian, you know, & how many books we will read together, but our still greater happiness will be in Shelley—I who love him so tenderly & entirely, whose life hangs on the beam of his eye, and whose whole soul is entirely wrapped up in him—you who have so sincere a friendship for him to make him happy—no, we need not try to do that, for everything we do will make him that without exertion, but to see him so—to see his love, his tenderness—dear, dearest Alexy, these are joys that fill your heart almost to bursting and draw tears more delicious than the smiles of love from your eyes. When I think of all that we three in

Here have been called away for a couple of hours from finishing your letter, so I

cannot finish the sentence I began or say much more, for when the course of one's feelings is interrupted they will not run rightly again; besides now Shelley & Clara are talking beside me, which is not a very good accompaniment when one is writing a letter to one one loves.

*Goodnight then—Good dreams to my Alexy—
Thomas Jefferson Hogg Esq. 34 Arundel Street Strand.*

Mary.

The following letter, though undated, was obviously written on 2nd March, for in Mary's Journal for that day we read 'A bustle of moving . . . Hogg comes in the evening'.

Mary was evidently greatly irritated by Peacock's choice of subjects for conversation, writing in her Journal the previous evening, 'Peacock comes. Talk about types, editions, and Greek letters all the evening', and adverting to the subject again in this letter, 'What a horrid man that Peacock is, talking of nothing but Greek letters & types!'

The 'very horrid place' from which Mary wrote was their lodgings in Hans Place.

LETTER XVIII

My own dear Hogg—

[Thursday, 2nd March, 1815]

You must come to us today in our new lodgings, for it is such a fine day that we have determined to remove, for this is a very horrid place & we are in great danger of arriving without any money, for the old woman is determined to fleece us. —What a horrid man that Peacock is, talking of nothing but Greek letters & types!

I write in hurry for the sun is hastening away, and I ought to journey by its light.

We shall see you tonight, and soon always - which is a very happy thing.

Your most affectionately *the Maie*
Mal il soit qui mal il pense
bring my garters.

When the baby was nine days old, the family moved to new lodgings.

The upset consequent on this proved too much for the sickly and prematurely-born infant, and four days after the move, it was found dead in the morning by its mother's side.

Hogg was constantly with them all through this time, proving himself extremely kind and sympathetic, and the only one with sufficient practical ability to deal with the difficulties with which they were surrounded.

Mary's letter, written on Monday, 6th March, is an intensely pathetic document. The Journal gives only a short entry for this day, 'Find my baby dead. Send for Hogg. Talk. A miserable day. In the evening read "Fall of the Jesuits". Hogg sleeps here.'

LETTER XIX

[Monday, 6th March, 1815]

My dearest Hogg my baby is dead— will you come to me as soon as you can — I wish to see you—It was perfectly well when I went to bed— I awoke in the night to give it suck it appeared to be sleeping so quietly that I would not awake it. It was dead then, but we did not find that out till morning —from its appearance it evidently died of convulsions—

Will you come — you are so calm a creature & Shelley is afraid of a fever from the milk—for I am no longer a mother now *Mary*

L. J. Hogg Esq — Holroyd Esq Holborn Court Grays Inn

As no letters from either Shelley or Mary written between 23rd April and the end of the month seem to have survived, and as the appropriate leaves of Mary's Journal have been lost, it has not so far been known where they were at this period, or how they were occupying their time.

From the ensuing letter, from Mary to Hogg, it seems that she and Shelley went to Salt Hill, intending to spend one or two nights, but found it so pleasant in the country that they spent three nights there, not returning until the 27th. It is probable that the first letter was written on the 24th, immediately before they left London.

It seems that they were depending at this time a good deal upon Hogg for financial assistance. Mary hints at this in her letter of the 25th, asking, 'Would it be too much expence? . . . I said you would not be angry'.

Possibly Clare's near presence was a little overpowering, and Mary was anxious to get a few days' freedom from her constant companionship, to be alone with Shelley, but at the same time either she could not resist the urge for constant communication with her Alexy, or thought it inadvisable to do so, for financial reasons.

It is a pity that Hogg's *Life of Shelley* ends just at this particular date, as otherwise there is no doubt that we should have been in possession of definite facts as to this short holiday.

Were the lost leaves of Mary's Journal destroyed for any ulterior reason? It seems odd that the only leaves missing should be those referring to these particular few days.

LETTER XX

[At the top of the sheet occur the following words in Shelley's hand, apparently the beginning of a letter, afterwards deleted.]

My dear friend

[April 24th, 1815?]

We shall be absent from London one day & our

[The rest of the sheet is in Mary's hand.]

Dear Jefferson

I am not hardhearted but Clary will explain to you how we are obliged to go away; you will perceive that it was indispensable.

We shall return tomorrow night or the next morning, so dear Jefferson, do not think very hard of the poor Pecksie who would not for all the world make you uncomfortable for a moment if she could help it.

Clary says that she will not get lodgings, so will you— but she will of course alter her mind.

Dear Jefferson, love me all the time, as I do you.

Affectionately yours The Pecksie dor to answer for.

We shall be very very glad to see you tomorrow evening if you can spare time, at Salt Hill.

Write directly as C [laire] shall direct.

[On the outside] Jefferson—

LETTER XXI

Dear Jefferson

Windmill Inn Salt Hill April 25th 1815

It would have required more than mortal fortitude (and such the Pecksie does not boast of) to have resisted the sight of Green fields and yew trees to have jogged up to London again— when your letters arrived Shelley's distich was truly applicable

*On her hind paws the Dormouse stood
In a wild & mingled mood
Of Maieishness & Pecksietude*

Would it be treating you ill & would it be too much expence? Shelley said that would not be too much expence. I said that you would not be angry with a dormouse who had escaped from her London Cage to green fields & acorns— dear Jefferson, I am sure that you are not so selfish (pardon the word) not to be very very sorry.

Well, here am I sitting in a parlour of the Windmill Inn, seeing the little white pales of the garden before, where the yew & Cypress flourishes in great abundance. After I have written to you & Clary, I mean to construe some Ovid & to be very industrious.

What a shocking place London is now! truly I hate it. Would that I were never to enter it again! Dear Jefferson, do give up the Law and come down & pass your days here, ay, at the Windmill Inn, if you please. I am sure that it's a better place than the Inns of Court.

Now notwithstanding your ill humour which would not allow me to write to you yesterday night, I expect a very long letter tomorrow & a very kind forgiving one too, or I will never speak to you again.

Well, Jefferson, take care of yourself and be good— the Pecksie will soon be

back all the better for her dormouseish jaunt, & remember, nothing take away from my Maieishness.

*For Maie girls are Maie girls
Wherever they're found
In Air or in Water
Or In the ground*

Now think of me very kindly while I am away, & receive me kindly when I come back, or I will be no more *Your affectionate Dormouse.*

I will write again in the evening or early tomorrow & tell you all the sights that I have seen

Jefferson Hogg Esq. 34 Arundel Street Strand

LETTER XXII

[P.M. not very legible, but probably 26th April, 1815.]

My dear Jefferson.

I am no doubt a very naughty dormouse [here follows a drawing of a minute dormouse] but indeed you must forgive me. Shelley is now returned; he went to Longdill's, did his business, & returned. He heard from Harriet's attorney that she meant (if he did not make a handsome settlement on her), to prosecute him for Atheism.

How are you amusing yourself with the Pecksie away? very doleful no doubt, but my poor Jefferson I shall soon be up again, & you may remember that even if we had staid you would not have seen much of me as you must have been with me.

Do you mean to come down to us? I suppose not. Prince Prudent. Well, as you please, but remember I should be very happy to see you. If you had not been a lawyer you might have come with us. Rain has come after a mild beautiful day, but Shelley & I are going to walk as it is only showery.

P.S.S. How delightful it is to read Poetry among green shades. Tintern Abbey filled me with delight.

But Shelley calls me to come, for

*The sun it is set
and night is coming.*

*I will write perhaps by a night Coach, or at least early tomorrow.
I shall return soon & remain till then an affectionate but*

Runaway Dormouse.

The Windmill Inn, from which these letters were written, was at Salt-hill, a little village on the Great West Road, which had considerable fame in earlier days from the fact that the Eton ceremony of 'Montem' took place there. The village has now completely lost its identity, having been merged with two neighbouring villages, Upton-cum-Chalvey, to form the modern town of Slough. Thus it would have been quite easy for Shelley and Mary to have travelled to London in the early morning in one of the many coaches running to London, and to arrive in the metropolis before breakfast.

These letters have a particular importance because the pages of the Journal for the material time are missing, and it has not hitherto been known where Shelley was at this date.

LETTER XXIII

Windmill Inn Salt Hill April 26th. 1815

Dear Jefferson

You must not go to courts very early tomorrow, as it is most likely we shall be with you about nine. We shall try to get a place in the mail which comes into London about seven, so you must rise early to receive the Dormouse all fresh from grubbing under the oaks.

But you must know that I think it very dangerous for Shelley to remain in London. The Bailiffs know Longdill to be his attorney, and of course will place spies there, and indeed what part of London can he walk about free in—none, I fear. Have you not thought of this, & what do you think of it now?—but more of this when we meet.

The dormouse is going to take a long ramble today among green fields and solitary lanes as happy as any little animal could be in finding herself in her native nests again. I shudder to think of breathing the air of London again. Jefferson, Jefferson, it is your duty not to keep any creature away from its home, so come; I

shall expect you tonight, and if you do not come, I am off — not for London, I promise you.

But, dear Jefferson, all things considered, the danger of Shelley remaining in London and my hatred of it, do you not think you ought to come to Salt Hill incontinently—Remember I shall believe that your love is all a farce if you do not— so I expect you.

Adieu—though he is but a bad sort of personage, yet he is good enough for you—A Dieu therefore.

I wish if there is time that you would send us some money, as I do not think we shall have quite enough.

You have not chosen to write to me—very well—I know by this what you are good for.

Yours—as we shall see when we know how you behave

A Runaway Dormouse

Jefferson Hogg Esq. 34 Arundel Street Strand

LETTER XXIV

My dear Friend

I shall be very happy to see you again, & to give you your share of our common treasure of which you have been cheated for several days. The Maie knows how highly you prize this exquisite possession, & takes occasion to quiz you in saying that it is necessary for me to absent from London, from your sensibility to its value. Do not fear. A few months [these three words crossed out]. We will not again be deprived of this participated pleasure.

I did all the requisite acts at Longdill's yesterday at one o'clock & returned immediately to the Pecksie. I could not persuade her to come to London.

Very affectionately yours P B Shelley.

Mr. Tom Hogg.

The tragic happenings of July, 1822, are too well known to need recapitulation. Among Hogg's papers is a letter from his friend Gisborne, giving him the details of Shelley's death, in place of a letter from Leigh Hunt which had been forwarded to him, and had gone astray.

It will be seen that for the greater part it but tells the story which had been previously published by Hunt's brother in the *Examiner*. There is, however, one point of importance, which has not previously, as far as I am aware, been mentioned. It concerns the third will which Shelley is stated to have made, in which Lord Byron was replaced by Hogg as joint-executor with Peacock. This will, which Gisborne definitely states he himself witnessed in 1819 or thereabouts, was never discovered, and the second will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Chancery as his last will, in the year 1844, when his father's death enabled it to become effective.

I have before me as I write the following letter:

Sir,

18 Bedford Row Dec 13th 1844

I am prepared on behalf of the devisee of the late Percy B. Shelley Esq to pay you the L.2000 legacy which he bequeathed to you payable on the death of his father.

I am Sir Your most obedt. servt.

John Gregson

Thos. J. Hogg Esq.

In consequence of the fact that the later will was never found, the legacies bequeathed by the previous one were duly paid. Hogg wrote to Mary, saying that he was glad to hear that Lord Byron had declined his legacy, and remarking that he wished his 'scanty fortunes would justify the like refusal' on his part. He was, however, at this time a poor man, and did not feel himself justified in refusing what would be a real help to his family.

Miss Norman, in her *After Shelley*, referring to the payment of this legacy, writes, 'His [Hogg's] letter is vaguely impudent . . . He contrasts his poverty with her [Mary's] affluence. As Hogg's father had died in 1840 it is unlikely that he was hard up.' Hogg's father, however, had cut him off from succession to the family estates, and the reasonable competence which he was able to leave to Jane and their daughter Prudentia, was almost entirely due to his arduous and unremitting work as a barrister.

The writer of the letter, John Gisborne, was an intimate friend of the Shelleys in Italy, and returned to England after many years' residence abroad, in the year 1821.

LETTER XXV

My dear Sir,

London 12th. Aug. 1822

The fatal news was communicated to J. Hunt in a letter from his Brother, of which the article in The Examiner is an abstract. Another letter was received at the same time by Miss Kent from Hunt which contained some further particulars. Miss Kent immediately sent the letter to you at your Chambers and by mistake of the bearer it put [sic] into your box. I think it probable that Peacock may have succeeded in recovering that letter, as I find a new article in the Morning Chronicle of this morning, which I think could only have been taken from that letter. It mentions that they left Leghorn at about 8 o'clock of the morning of the 8th. with fine weather, that a storm rose, which must have been uncommonly violent. At about 5 in the afternoon in the midst of this tempest, a fisherman saw their boat, and in a moment looked again and saw it no more. He had observed a boy, who was with them, aloft, attempting to furl the sail. This it appears was off Via Reggio, and their boat must have foundered. The bodies were washed ashore a few days afterwards. Our poor friend had been reading the last Volume of the works of Keats. It was found in his pocket, doubled back, and thrust open into his pocket. The writer of the account observes that something fatal was to be expected from the over daring of S. and his friend Williams.

I have received a short letter from Hunt and Peacock has a dreadful one from Mary. Peacock has written to you. I understand you are named executor in an altered will in lieu of Lord Byron, which I should think most fortunate. The altered will I witnessed about three years ago : but Mary has not yet succeeded in finding it among the papers.

I find no words to express what I feel on this fearful occasion. A week has already passed and the impression remains as vividly fixed on our minds as it was on the first moment of our hearing the tragical event.

Time softens all things, even our greatest sorrows : but wounds inflicted by such griefs as these must, so long as we exist, often [illegible ; spring ?] afresh.

Mrs. G. and Henry beg to offer you the assurances of their kindest and unalterable regards.

Most sincerely your's

T. Gisborne.

T. Jefferson Hogg Esqre. Norton near Stockton on Tees.

Sealed in scarlet wax with the arms of Gisborne.

The next letter speaks for itself; the letter of a broken-hearted woman, writing to one who—as she was the first to acknowledge—was her late husband's greatest and closest friend, the one whom 'he always loved best' . . . 'who was most singularly attached to him'.

LETTER XXVI

My dear Friend

I am truly obliged for the message that you sent me through Mrs. Williams 'you have not the heart to write to me'—no wonder! Miserable wreck as I am—left in the destruction of the noblest fabric of humanity to tell of it—to mourn over it—& mark its ruin—who can visit me even in thought without a shudder—who can communicate with me without being shadowed by the misery which penetrates me. Our divine Shelley has left me, my dear Jefferson, your fellow collegiate, one who always loved you the best—but to you I need not praise him.

I do not write to you merely to pour forth the bitterness of my spirit. Although our connexion was marked by storms, & circumstances led me often into erroneous conduct with regard to you, yet now bereft of all, I willingly turn to my Shelley's earliest friend, & to one whom I am persuaded, notwithstanding all, thinks kindly of me. I write to ask your advice. I believe you know my character sufficiently to be aware how deeply it is tinged with irresolution & an incapacity of action. Hitherto I have had little to do with forming any mode of action, even in the common occurrences of life. If I have interfered in the legislative, I have had nothing to do with the executive part of our little government—I am aghast when I have anything to do—but a crisis must come, & I must determine on something. You have some knowledge of my lost Shelley's family; you will

neither be actuated by prejudice or the contrary, I wish therefore to discuss my affairs with you. Will you not lend me your best intelligence to aid me—for indeed I am a poor hand in these matters.

When Jane returned to England I had at first determined to accompany her, thinking it necessary for my interests to be on the spot—& that when in London any application to Sir T. S. would be more effectual than while I was abroad. Lord Byron dissuaded me from this; his arguments were shortly these:—that I spent all my money in a journey; that I had none or a very miserable home to receive me—& that all arrangements with my father-in-law could be managed as well in my absence from England. Attached from a thousand reasons to this divine country, dismayed at the prospect of wretchedness that awaited me in London, I readily acquiesced. Lord B was executor—he promised to take the most active part in fulfilling the duties of an office he accepted. He had every right to advise me. So I came to Genoa & have resided under the roof of the Hunts, husbanding my means, & awaiting the result of the negotiations made for me.

First (at my father's request) Lord B. wrote to his Solicitor Hanson to communicate with Whitton concerning me. The result might be guessed—Sir T. S. would give no reply. Lord B then wrote to Sir T. S. himself, a letter which had my approbation. An answer arrived the other day. After reprobating my conduct, saying that he suspects me of having estranged his son's mind from the respect due to Lady S. & himself (you know the parties & are aware what canting nonsense this is) he refuses to interfere in any of my concerns. As for my boy, if I bring him to England, and will place him under the care of such a person as he will approve, he will afford him a suitable, tho limited maintenance.

Now this is my situation, & what shall I do? This letter found me leading a most solitary life, immersed in study, occupied by no external circumstance except the care of my darling boy—and having found in this mode of life the only balm I can conceive for the miseries I have endured. At present living with the Hunts, I spend little. I have still some money remaining from the sum I possessed on my arrival in Genoa, I have received some money from the Liberal, & if that publication continues, shall continue regularly to receive more. Such are the benefits attendant on the continuance of my present situation. Peace & solitude. But again L. B. now offers to provide means for my return to England. We may be scattered. L. B. will probably leave this part of the world—the Liberal may

die. I cannot burden the Hunts. I am without resource ---and the future, I own, terrifies me.

Shall I then come to England?—You may guess that I do not make it a question whether I will part with my boy. He is my all. My other children I have lost, & the pangs I endured when those events happened were so terrible, that even now, injured as I am to mental pain —I look back with affright to those periods of agony. My tree of life is felled & I live only in the little sprout that shadows greenly its fearful ruin. I could not live a day without my boy. Let them persuade me that my existence is detrimental to his future prospects and I will not burthen the earth any longer— --but go to Rome & die. But I live persuaded that his delicate frame requires maternal solicitude, & that in my affection & attention he will pass a childhood of happiness, whatever evils may afterwards befall him. That L. B. should have counselled my acquiescence does not surprize me. But the very idea of such a doubt threw me for several days into a state of agitation I cannot describe. If I go to England will they not try to force him from me? It would require force indeed, I would die in the struggle —but one cannot look forward to such contests with equanimity. But other ideas suggest themselves. Lord B. will (as you suggest) write to Lord Holland to interest himself for me. —If on my arrival in England Sir T. S. finds me protected by people whose rank he respects, he may consider me a fitting person to have the charge of my infant. I wish his childhood to be prosperous. Italian skies of themselves shed prosperity— --but looking towards England we cannot find that, except in the mansions of the rich —& one wishes that he should be properly recognized & protected by his father's family. They will of course be much more prejudiced against me than they are, if I, young & tieless, reside abroad —out of their English pale —the sanctuary of virtue & propriety. They will look on me indeed as a black, black sheep if I do not hasten to place myself beneath all the benefits of their clouded atmosphere & foggy virtue. I shall be la paragonare with the Queen alone.

I love Italy —its sky canopies the tombs of my lost treasures—its sun—its vegetation—the solitude I can here enjoy —the easy life one can lead—my habits now of five years growth —all & everything endears Italy to me beyond expression. The thought of leaving it fills me with painful tumults—tears come into my eyes. I prognosticate all evils. Yet if I stay, how very desolate I may become. The Hunts are very kind— --but they are poor. Hunt in his generous nature is delighted

to be of use to me---& I am not too proud to accept an obligation ; gratitude is to me a pleasing feeling ; but I shrink from linking my fate too closely---& then I would not for worlds burthen them. If I should be left alone---without the means of proceeding to England--- I thought that I ought to follow Lord B's advice in staying, ought I not follow it in going? though his idea that I ought to part with mine own Shelley's babe invalidates his advice. Could I ever cease to find my sole comfort in having him perpetually with me---watching the dawnings of his mind, inspiring him with due respect for his unequalled father, & spreading joy over his infant years?

What! shall I proclaim myself unworthy to have the care of my boy?---Never--- even if I could live & do it, I would not, & if I were persuaded that I ought, then I should die.

If you are at all acquainted with the entail of my Shelley's property you best know what confidence I may put in his will. If that will stands, I shall be rich one day, & the present moment alone is to be provided for. If that stands, my boy's future will depend on me, & I become in every way his fitting guardian.

Again---I arrive in England poor to nothingness---I reside (even if that can be) in my father's house---poverty & misery around me--- anxious care---but that must be mine wherever I am.

Yet my present life is a peaceful one. I see little even of those with whom I live--- that is not their fault, but mine. I study---I write---I think even to madness & torture of the past---I look forward to the grave with hope---but in exerting my intellect---in forcing myself to real study---I find an opiate which at least adds nothing to the pain of regret that must necessarily be mine for ever.

Thus, my dear Jefferson, I send you a true picture of my situation. You can shew it to Mrs. Williams, and she may help you to understand it. Again I appeal to you for counsel---What shall I do? Consider that my child's interest in the question to be solved---I would do all, sacrifice all for him. What is best for him, is best for me. Let that consideration guide you. All sacrifice will be light to me, made for his benefit. Study, tranquillity, Italy and all its tranquil airs may go to the winds, if that they should, be best for him---care, poverty, & the ills of England will be welcome to me if they conduce to his benefit. I will do all but part with him---though if that should be necessary (but it is not) I would die---but what child could be benefited by the death of a mother whose life hangs upon his?

Pardon me that I have thus troubled you. Pardon me that I recall to your memory & force your attention to a hapless being, who since she last saw you has been tamed by every misery under the sun ; and who, hopeless & wishless of any good in this life, prays daily for death when her life is no longer useful to the only tie that remains for her.

Sorrow came upon me in my youth—& now still young— I have lost all even to wishing for. My only relief is in the exercise of my mind, the improvement of my understanding, & the acquirement of knowledge. I fear & fly society—my child is my sole companion— I wish only for this grave like tranquillity, if it be consistent with his prospects— & if indeed it can in any way continue under the present circumstances.

If I return to England I shall see you, & in talking to you of your lost friend I shall find one of the very few consolations that I can expect to find in that country. I do not think that you will find me what I was, but tamed to submission to my hard fate, grateful for kindness & as full of affection as one devoted to the past, & future beyond life —& looking on the present as a dark passage that must be gone through— tolerant— fearful— easily agitated but still reserved & diffident— --what more?

I have talked long enough of myself— if you see me again you will judge for yourself —if not, still think with kindness of the selected & chosen one of your friend, his constant companion & truest, perpetual mourner.

As one whom I believe to have been most singularly attached to him --as the spectator of the first years I spent with him, I must ever turn to you as a true friend

Most sincerely yours Mary Shelley

Albaro—Near Genoa Febry 28th.

T. Jefferson Hogg Esq. 1 Garden Court Temple London Londres Inghilterra

Postmarked GENOVA MR 13 1823, and marked with the postage, 5/9. Sealed in black wax with the Godwin seal, 'The Judgment of Paris', which she gave to Shelley, and is now in the Bodleian, attached to Shelley's watch-chain, together with his other seals.

Three other letters from Mary Shelley remain among the unpublished Hogg material. The first of these letters is interesting as showing how

skilfully Hogg managed to conceal from Mary the progress of his passion for Jane, which had begun immediately he met her. Though this letter is dated 11th November, this is obviously a mistake for 11th February; the post-mark clearly gives the latter date.

The final letter will also prove of value to Shelley students, inasmuch as it shows that Mary continued to consult Hogg on her legal and financial affairs, many years after their intimate friendship had ceased.

LETTER XXVII

My dear Jefferson

I trust that you hold yourself engaged to accompany Jane & I to the theatre on Friday—be with me by six—I saw Jane today—Dina is convalescent.

How can you empty the mighty vessels of your fearful wrath on so frail a plant as woman? Do—that's a good child, fall in love & you will become more tender hearted when instead of a weeder of those bending flowers you are turned into a prop—nicely painted green & tied to one by a piece of matting.

Yours in all friendship

Mary Shelley

Nov. 11th [but post-marked 11 Feb. 1824]

T. Jefferson Hogg Esq. &c. &c. &c. 1 Garden Court Temple

LETTER XXVIII

Dear Jeff

[Undated; 1824?]

Have you the works of Cicero? I am getting ashamed of my neglect of latin & wish to rub it up—I want to read the orations, letters, etc. of Cicero—if you would lend them me, or tell me how & where I could get a loan of them, you would oblige me infinitely

Yr. truly M. S.

T. J. Hogg Esq

Folded into a cocked hat.

LETTER XXIX

My dear Jefferson

I hope you will not consider me indiscreet in asking your opinion & aid in a point very material to me. Moxon has offered me L. 500 for the copyright of Shelley's poems. Till the will is proved my claim to them is not established—so Moxon wanted Peacock to sign the agreement also as Shelley's Executor. Peacock said he could not without incurring indefinite risks. So I agreed that in the agreement I should pledge myself to indemnify Mr. Moxon if any one else claimed the copyright as inheriting it from Shelley. Percy could be the only person. In the agreement however it is mentioned that I am to indemnify him for any expences incurred in resisting piracies— which is out of the question—for Moxon is aware, having years ago taken an opinion that till the will is proved I cannot get an injunction from Chancery.

I enclose you my letter to him dissenting from this clause. Would you very kindly look over the agreement & see if any other objection arises. Mr. Proctor is Mr. Moxon's legal adviser—perhaps it would be best to see him— but I must not give you too much trouble. Let me know what you think as soon as you can. Gregson would not I think refuse to see Moxon's adviser & tell him that I am the personal representative of Shelley when the will is proved, & that Percy is such until then.

I am dear Jeff Yrs. truly M W Shelley

41 d Park St 12 Jan'y /39.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

WAS HOGG TO BLAME?—ACCORDING TO HARRIET—ACCORDING TO SHELLEY—THE SHELLEYS' FLIGHT FROM YORK—WHY DID SHELLEY MARRY HARRIET?—'THE LOATHSOME WORM'—LITTLE MORE THAN CHILDREN—SHELLEY'S HALLUCINATIONS—RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FACTS—SHELLEY'S BELATED APOLOGIES—REASONS FOR HOGG'S ALTERATIONS.

MR. JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON, THE AUTHOR OF *THE Real Shelley: New Views of the Poet's Life*, has frequently been stigmatized as a ridiculous and fanciful biographer, who allowed preconceived ideas to tamper with his presentation of the truth; and this largely on account of the way in which he treated what he considered to be Shelley's hallucinations.

Perhaps the way in which he treated the quarrel between Shelley and Hogg, if so one-sided a disagreement can justifiably be termed a quarrel, was the chief reason for the distaste with which the poet's idolaters regarded the book.

There cannot be the least doubt but that all Shelley's apologists deliberately sacrificed Hogg's character in order to whiten that of Shelley, and this with very little regard for truth.

Let us suppose, for instance, that Hogg was the unutterable villain whom so many 'Shelley-olaters' would make him out to be. Suppose, which is in the highest degree unlikely, that Hogg had deliberately set out to seduce Harriet a few weeks after her marriage; that she, revolted at such treachery and bad taste, had informed Shelley. This, after all, is what Shelley's apologists would have us believe. Then, within the shortest possible space of time, we find that Shelley had not only forgiven his friend, but was begging him to return to live with him and his wife again, that all was to be as before, and the whole wretched business was to be erased from the tablets of memory.

And to this almost incredible situation, they would have us add the fact that Shelley had so forgotten the very elements of decency, the very rudiments of honourable feeling, that while forgiving his friend, he at the same time broadcast the shame inflicted on his wife and the treachery of his friend, by writing long letters, describing Hogg's misdemeanour in a wealth of words, to a number of people, amongst whom was his 'spiritual partner', the country schoolmistress, and smuggler's daughter, Elizabeth Hitchener.

All this farrago of absurdity we are expected to swallow, but even this is not all. For Hogg, apart from some letters to Shelley, which presumably do not now exist, since they have never seen the light of day, never attempted to clear himself from the monstrous charge. And why? Obviously, because he was a better friend to Shelley than Shelley ever was to him. He must have known, for it was obvious, that for him to take seriously so outrageous an accusation, and seriously to enter a defence, could only redound to Shelley's discredit; such a defence would necessitate showing Shelley in the light of a being mentally disturbed, subject to hallucinations, who was in fact not really responsible for his actions.

It follows, then, that Hogg, the generous, self-sacrificing friend, was prepared to bear the stigma of a revolting crime, for it could hardly be considered less, rather than bring upon the friend who had so little faith in him, the corresponding stigma of mental affliction.

It must be remembered, too, that Shelley--out of whose memory the whole affair seems to have quickly passed, leaving but a vague recollection of the fact that he had behaved unfairly to his friend--came back to Hogg, called on him in his chambers in London, re-introduced him to the very girl of whose attempted seduction he had but a short time before accused him, and was at once and with no further trouble on the old footing of complete and unembarrassed familiarity.

One must not forget, also, the way in which he made Hogg partner of his inmost feelings, at the time when he had made his decision to leave Harriet and elope with Mary, as the long-lost letter which I now publish in full for the first time, testifies.

In November, 1811, Shelley had left his wife, Harriet, in York, in the care of his friend Hogg, while he himself was absent for a short visit in Sussex. On his return he found Harriet's sister, Eliza Westbrook, in complete control of the household, and noticed moreover that his wife's attitude towards Hogg was completely changed from what it was when he had left York, and that she now regarded him with aversion.

When he enquired the cause of her change of feeling, she replied with vague hints as to Hogg's 'unworthiness', and on being pressed, said that Hogg had made her a declaration of love. She said also that he had made advances to her immediately on their arrival at York, when she had forbidden any further mention of the subject, preferring to leave her husband in ignorance of the matter, but that, after Shelley had left for Sussex, Hogg had again opened the subject, and renewed his advances.

That is Harriet's story, as far as we know, though it must be remembered that the only authority we have is Shelley's correspondence with his 'soul-mate', Elizabeth Yorke (or to use the name by which she preferred to be known, though apparently with no other right than that of preference, Elizabeth Hitchener).

To this woman Shelley wrote in a letter, dated 8th November, 1811: 'You know how I have described Hogg, — my enthusiasm in his defence, my love for him. . . You know I came to Sussex to settle my affairs, and left Harriet at York under the protection of Hogg. You know the implicit faith I had in him. . . . Can you then conceive that he would have attempted to *seduce my wife*? that he should have chosen the very time for this attempt when I most confided in him, when least I doubted him?' [Reference 1.]

'Before I quitted York', Shelley goes on, 'I spoke to him. Our conversation was long. He was silent, pale, over-whelmed. . . . I told him that I pardoned him—freely, fully, completely pardoned; that not the least anger against him possessed me. His vices, and not himself, were the objects of my horror and my hatred. . . . I engaged him to promise to write to me. You can conjecture that my letters to him will be neither infrequent nor short.' This promise was most assuredly fulfilled!

Six days later Shelley wrote again to Miss Hitchener, being apparently careless as to what damage he might do to the reputation of his friend. In this letter he went into intimate details of what he was pleased to term Hogg's 'unfaithfulness'. I quote: 'I have more to tell you, however, which relates to this late terrible affair. The day we left him, he wrote several letters to me, the first evidently in the frenzy of his disappointment (for I had not told him the *time* of our departure). "I will have Harriet's forgiveness, or blow my brains out at her feet." . . . I will proceed historically. I had observed that Harriet's behaviour to my friend had been greatly altered, I saw she regarded him with pain and hatred. . . . Her dark hints of his unworthiness alarmed me, yet alarmed me vaguely. . . . Conceive my horror when on pressing the conversation, the secret of his unfaithfulness was divulged. I sought him, and we walked to the fields beyond York. I desired to know fully the account of this affair. I heard it *from him*, and I believe he was sincere. . . . His account was this—He came to Edinburgh, he saw me; he saw Harriet. He loved her (I use the word because he used it; you comprehend the different ideas it excites under different modes of application), he loved her. His passion, so far from meeting with resistance, was encouraged,—purposely encouraged, from motives which then appeared to him not wrong.—On our arrival at York, he avowed it.—Harriet forbade other mention, yet forebore to tell me, hoping she might hear no more of it. On my departure from York to Sussex (when you saw me), he urged the same suit, urged it with arguments of detestable sophistry. . . . These failed of success. . . . The circumstances are true, Harriet's account coincides. I have since written to him frequently, and at great length.' [Ref: 2.]

That is Shelley's story. That it is not wholly true is certain; that it contains a substratum of truth is equally certain. How much is true, how much false, how much misunderstanding and how much hallucination, it is our present object to find out; which we can only do by an examination of the original letters sent by Shelley to Hogg, since we have no other original documents in the case (save, of course, Shelley's letters to Elizabeth Hitchener, which are only evidence as to Shelley's own opinions).

The first point to be settled is, what was the real reason for the precipitate flight of the Shelleys from York? Four reasons suggest themselves: either (1) Hogg had made outrageous love to Harriet, or (2) he had not done so, but Harriet chose to believe that he had, and told her husband in a boastful way, or (3) he had not done so, but Eliza Westbrook had played upon Harriet until she was frightened that he would do so, or (4) that he had not done so, and that Shelley, in thinking so, was suffering from one of his frequent hallucinations.

None of these, however, will suffice of itself. The matter is more complicated than that.

First, it must be remembered that we are judging from the letters of one side only, which in any case tends to prejudge the issue, and secondly, our minds are apt to believe the worst of Hogg from our fore-knowledge that before publication, he considerably altered the letters, for reasons to be discussed later. This latter fact we must temporarily dismiss from our minds; 'it is not in the evidence'.

I would suggest that a careful consideration of the letters makes this point clear: that Hogg somewhat dramatically expressed his admiration for Harriet (he admitted as much, according to Shelley's complaining letter to Elizabeth Hitchener); that Harriet told her husband, who read much more into it than was the case; that Eliza, the bitter and revengeful Eliza, used all her influence to turn Shelley against his friend; and finally, that Shelley, as was so frequently the case, let his wild and unbridled imagination get complete control of him, and accused Hogg of an attempt at the seduction of his wife, of which Hogg never dreamed.

It is unfortunate that Hogg's letters in reply are no longer extant; all that we have to go on are the almost unbalanced charges made by Shelley in his letters; but to whatever charges Hogg pleaded guilty—and, as I said above, it is almost certain that they were but stupidity and indiscretion—we can be quite sure he never admitted his guilt of the revolting act with which his best friend freely charged him.

However, whatever really happened and whatever Shelley really believed, he and Harriet hurried away from York, leaving Hogg to face an awkward situation without a word of explanation, save a possible inter-

view shortly before their departure, concerning which we have no information, save that contained in a letter to Miss Hitchener.

There is yet another point of which insufficient notice has been taken by Shelley's biographers. When the question of the elopement of Shelley and Harriet was first mooted, Shelley was quite willing to dispense with the ceremony of marriage. Granted that in accordance with his Godwinian views there was no moral occasion for any such ceremony, yet he did in fact *marry* her in accordance with Scots law—though the prescribed demands of residence were not properly fulfilled—and why? Solely because Hogg insisted upon it; because *he* made Shelley see how unfair it would be to Harriet not to give her the legal protection of his name and the status of a married woman.

Thirdly, we must consider the responsibility of Eliza Westbrook in the whole affair. Hogg's intense dislike of, and contempt for, this singularly unpleasing woman, is quite obvious in his book; that Shelley's equal dislike of her quickly turned to loathing, is certain. An unbiassed examination of the results of her influence upon her younger sister makes it very evident that hers is the larger part of the responsibility for the utter shipwreck of Harriet's marriage.

In a letter to Hogg, written two years later, Shelley says: 'Eliza is still with us —not here!—but will be with me when the infinite malice of destiny forces me to depart. I am now but little inclined to contest this point. I certainly hate her with all my heart and soul. It is a sight which awakens an inexpressible sensation of disgust and horror, to see her caress my poor little lanthe. . . . I sometimes feel faint with the fatigue of checking the overflowings of my unbounded abhorrence for this miserable wretch. But she is no more than a blind and loathsome worm, that cannot see to sting.' [Ref: 3.]

Again, in a letter to Mary, dated 15th December, 1816, the day he heard the news of Harriet's tragic death (though probably written the following day), he writes in such a way as may be considered a virtual charge against Eliza of the murder of her sister. 'There is but one voice

in condemnation of the detestable Westbrooks. If they should dare to bring it before Chancery, a scene of such fearful horror would be unfolded as would cover them with scorn and shame.' [Ref: 4.]

The same day, however, he writes to Eliza, 'the loathsome worm', 'Allow me to assure you that I give no faith to any of the imputations generally cast on your conduct or that of Mr. Westbrook towards the unhappy victim. . . . I can most sincerely say, that I should eagerly seize any occasion of convincing you that I bear no malice.' [Ref: 5.] Is this abnormality? or merely policy?

Apart from Eliza's responsibility for the unhappiness of the marriage, we must not forget her responsibility for the arrangement of the match. There is not a shadow of doubt but that she engineered the whole thing. At the end of April, 1811, Harriet was ill. Eliza sent late in the evening for Shelley, 'to minister comfort to the invalid; was herself more than commonly amiable in manner; began by discoursing on love; then led him to her sister, and finding that her own company was too much for the sufferer, withdrew'. [Ref: 6.] Shelley himself in a letter to Hogg, says 'I stayed till half-past twelve'. A young and unprotected girl alone with a youth of nineteen in a bedroom, and after midnight! What matter whereon—in 1811—to base a confident suggestion of marriage to a chivalrous youth of acute sensibility! I cannot but think that the incident was not entirely fortuitous, so far as Harriet was concerned.

Another point of which insufficient notice is sometimes taken is the extreme youth of most of the parties. Shelley had just celebrated his nineteenth birthday; Hogg was not yet twenty; Harriet was still a schoolgirl of sixteen; Eliza was the only adult of the party, being then in her thirty-second year. It is difficult to realize, when reading their somewhat formal, stilted and academic correspondence, that the writers were little more than children, after all.

Next, concerning the question of possible hallucination. It is certain that about this same time, Shelley suffered from hallucination on another matter. He thought himself attacked by a robber, from whom he

escaped with considerable difficulty. There is no doubt whatever but that there was no robber, no attack and no escape, and if the whole freakish fancy were only a nervous derangement caused by Shelley's habit of taking drugs, it was none the less an hallucination. This occurred at the time when he was at Keswick; but there are other instances, both before and after this period of his life, when his mind was considerably deranged, and when he thought himself attacked, and his honour defamed, without any other cause than his freakish imagination.

Mary Shelley, writing many years afterwards, quotes a statement of Shelley's which, she says, she had often heard him make. 'Once', said he, 'when I was very ill during the holidays, as I was recovering from a fever which had attacked my brain, a servant overheard my father consult about sending me to a private mad-house. I was a favourite among all our servants, so this fellow came and told me as I lay sick in bed. My horror was beyond words, and I might have been mad indeed, if they had proceeded in their iniquitous plan. I had one hope. I was master of three pounds in money, and, with the servant's help, I contrived to send an express to Dr. Lind. He came, and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menaces had the desired effect.' [Ref: 7.]

Concerning this absurd and totally untrue accusation against Sir Timothy, Hogg writes, 'I have heard Shelley speak of . . . this scene at Field Place more than once, in nearly the same terms as Mrs. Shelley adopts. It appeared to myself, and to others also, that his recollections were those of a person not quite recovered from a fever, which had attacked his brain.' [Ref: 8.] How could a friend write more definitely and still kindly, to give the unquestionably true impression that Shelley suffered from hallucinations from time to time?

That Hogg ever attempted to seduce Harriet, however, is utterly fantastic. That he was greatly attracted by her is quite probable, in fact almost certain; that he was accustomed to a feeling of common ownership with Shelley is equally the case; but that he tried to make her his mistress during Shelley's short absence, knowing her character, her

bourgeois outlook, her adoration of her husband, and the vulgarity of mind which would inevitably make her at once boast or complain, as the case might be, to Shelley—such a supposition is out of the question.

He flirted with her; so much is obvious: he, a young man, and she, a girl, both attractive, good-looking, intelligent, and both under the chaperonage of the unpleasant sister-in-law. They flirted, the one with the other, but that was all.

I quote Jeaffreson, who, it seems to me, perfectly explains—and with the most scrupulous fairness—how much and how little it was that Shelley in fact had against Hogg in the Harriet affair. ‘Almost up to the moment of the cessation of his correspondence with Hogg, Shelley accused his friend of nothing worse than indiscretion, weakness, insincerity, imbecility:—i.e. indiscretion, in allowing so much of passionate fervour to qualify his admiration of Harriet; weakness, in prolonging the intimacy that was causing him perilous excitement; insincerity, in trying to disguise from himself the nature of the feelings into which he had been betrayed; and imbecility, surpassing mere weakness, in declining to combat the feelings whose indulgence tended to wickedness.’ [Ref: 9.]

I have not the least doubt but that anyone coming fresh to the letters with no preconceptions as to Hogg’s villainy and Shelley’s perfection of character, would at once judge that Shelley had quite sound grounds of complaint against Hogg for his stupidity and his weakness—in fact, for an indiscretion—but they would never credit, *from these letters*, that Shelley believed him guilty of an heinous crime.

It seems to me (though I can necessarily give but my view of the probable happenings), that the affair can be reconstructed in some such way as this.

Hogg was nineteen years of age; Harriet but sixteen. He was a gentleman by birth and education; she was the daughter of a publican, and, though educated much above her proper station in life, she retained the outlook of her class. That this was Hogg’s view of her cannot be doubted; he unquestionably treated her with a freedom of address which he would not have used towards his equals. One might perhaps find him

guilty of rudeness in so doing, but it is quite obvious that he looked upon her as a social inferior, although she was his friend's wife. It can well be imagined that, were all words of compliment and dalliance forbidden, Hogg might well have found it difficult to endure the tedium of a prolonged tête-à-tête with a lady so little equipped with the tastes and accomplishments that might have made an intellectual appeal to him. Small wonder then that he had recourse to the only 'pass-time' that seemed open to him, the indulgence in a flirtation, not unaccompanied by the flattering words of an admiration which he unquestionably felt, but would have hesitated to express had the circumstances been different.

'Most men', says Francis Gribble, 'it seems safe to assume, would rather spend an evening in paying compliments to a girl of sixteen, if she were beautiful and amiable, than in hearing her read extracts from the historical works of Dr. Robertson. Nor need any trouble be caused by the compliments unless the girl were exceptionally silly— or unless a mischief-maker intervened.' [Ref: 10.]

Harriet, however (as her stoutest champion could not deny), was an exceptionally silly girl; and a powerful mischief-maker *did* intervene in the person of Harriet's elder sister Eliza, the engineer of her young sister's marriage, a woman in almost every respect worthy of her brother-in-law's description of her, 'a blind and loathsome worm that cannot see to sting'—in every respect, that is, save as to her inability to sting, a faculty which she possessed in the highest degree, and which she exercised to the full.

Hogg intensely disliked her, a dislike which she cordially reciprocated. His description of her, even though toned down by the years that elapsed before he wrote it, is still sufficiently virulent:

'I had ample leisure to contemplate the addition to our domestic circle. She was older than I had expected, and she looked much older than she was. The lovely face was seamed with the small-pox, and of a dead white, as faces so much marked and scarred commonly are; as white, indeed, as a mass of boiled rice, but of a dingy hue, like rice boiled in dirty water. The eyes were dark but dull, and without meaning; the hair

was black and glossy but coarse; and there was the admired crop—a long crop, much like the tail of a horse—a switch tail. The fine figure was meagre, prim, and constrained. The beauty, the grace, and the elegance existed, no doubt, in their utmost perfection, but only in the imagination of her partial young sister.’ [Ref: 111.]

Even allowing for possible prejudice, there is no doubt whatever that Eliza was an extremely unpleasant woman, going to incredible lengths in order to entrap the young heir to a baronetcy and a large fortune into marriage with her sister.

Harriet apparently referred in some way, in conversation with Eliza, to Hogg’s behaviour to her. That she said Hogg had tried to seduce her, which was what Eliza made out of Harriet’s words, is almost certainly untrue; and it seems improbable that Harriet ever said anything of the kind, until she had been worked upon by her elder sister, who had her own reasons for discrediting Hogg in Shelley’s eyes.

On Shelley’s return, Eliza told him her story, backing it up by appeals to Harriet, coupled, one cannot doubt, in the form of leading questions.

This clever and wicked woman, of much longer experience of the world than her young and unsophisticated brother-in-law—a brother-in-law, moreover, whose imagination was never particularly stable or well-controlled—poured these poisonous suggestions into his ears.

What could Shelley do except run at once to his friend, repeat Eliza’s statements, and demand an explanation? This he did. We do not know, for we have no documentary evidence, exactly what Hogg replied, but, in the light of the letters which Shelley wrote to Miss Hitchener a few days afterwards, it seems certain that Hogg admitted to an admiration of Harriet (which he quite truthfully felt), but denied any attempt at seduction.

Again I quote from Gribble. ‘All that he could do was to try to steer an embarrassed middle course, protesting somewhat in this style, in the midst of impatient interruptions:—“Shelley! Shelley! My dear Shelley! What an amazing accusation! Who on earth has been putting such extraordinary ideas into your head? What’s that you say? Harriet told

you herself? Harriet complained to you that I chucked her under the chin? Well I never—Do I deny it? you ask. I've no recollection of doing anything of the kind; but of course I don't like to contradict a lady; and you may be quite sure that, if I did, it was done with the very best intentions. I'd no idea she minded. She didn't seem to at the time. I'm quite willing to beg her pardon if she did. I can't say more than that, can I? What! You're not satisfied? You want to pick a quarrel with me about it? Well, then, confound it, Shelley, if you insist upon quarrelling—." [Ref: 12.]

The above remarks, as Gribble takes pains to emphasize, are of course purely imaginary, but it seems probable that they fairly represent Hogg's answers to the outrageous charge brought against him.

Certainly Shelley's letters to Hogg, written from Keswick just after the journey which he and Harriet made to the north, show a remarkable variation in the expressions of the poet's feelings toward Hogg. It seems fairly certain that these letters were written under Eliza's influence, exercised through the medium of Harriet, who was too stupid, and too much flattered at the idea of being fought over by a husband and a lover, to attempt to explain the truth, but the real begetter of the trouble was the unpleasant Eliza, upon whom must rest the responsibility for the marriage of the ill-assorted pair.

In 1818, Shelley in *Laon and Cythna* showed that he at last understood and appreciated what Hogg had done for him, in suffering without complaint the unworthy suspicions which had been cast upon him:

*The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
An armed youth—over his spear he bent
His downward face—'A friend!' I cried aloud,
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.*

*I sat beside him while the morning beam
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him*

*Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim :
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,
As if it drowned in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim :
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
He looked on me, and cried in wonder—'thou art here!'*

*Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found ;
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded ;
The truth now came upon me, on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.*

[Canto V, Stanzas 3, 4 and 5.]

Shelley evidently did not consider that he had made sufficient amends to his friend for his outrageous suspicions, for among his papers were found the first few paragraphs of an essay on friendship, written shortly before his tragic death. The dedication of this fragment ran as follows:

'I once had a friend, whom an inextricable multitude of circumstances has forced me to treat with apparent neglect. To him I dedicate this essay. If he finds my own words condemn me, will he not forgive?'

Hogg, who published the fragment in his *Life of Shelley*, made the following comment, 'Yes; he has forgiven you! I saw this fragment for the first time, a few months ago; I listened to the question, as to a voice from another world, heard once more after a silence of thirty-five long years; and I immediately answered it. I thankfully accept the dedication.'

[Ref: 13.]

Finally, we come to the important question, 'Why did Hogg alter the

letters, before printing them?' It is an answer, as simple as incorrect, to say that he did so in order to hide his treachery from public knowledge. If he were indeed guilty of the attempted seduction of Harriet, would he have published the letters at all? Upon what compulsion? There was none. There was ample other material available, and he could not have needed these few letters to enlarge the book, since two volumes were required to deal with the years up to 1815, not to mention the fact that two other volumes were in contemplation, one of which was already completed in manuscript. It is improbable that anyone but Hogg knew of the existence of these letters, since they were his own property, and did not form part of the large dossier of material put into his hands by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley.

In the circumstances, then, what reason could he have had for publishing them, and, if a cogent reason for publishing existed, why alter them before publication?

Cordy Jeaffreson's explanation seems eminently satisfactory. 'Aware that he had for a time been the victim of Shelley's marital jealousy . . . the biographer reasonably determined (for his honour's sake no less than for the sake of his Friend's honour) to exhibit . . . a document, so largely and precisely eloquent of the feelings and considerations that occasioned the breach. At the same time it was no less natural for the personal historian to shrink from calling universal attention to a matter, so little calculated to win respect and sympathy for the poet in whose honour the history was being written.' [Ref: 14.]

High moralists may condemn the slightest tampering with the written word, but it remains true that published correspondence is not always that which appears on the yellowing pages from which it was taken, any more than published speeches were ever delivered, or, if delivered, were spoken as set out in print.

Casuistry in the true sense of the word teaches us that the end justifies the means—a moral judgment that, of course, postulates a worthy end and justifiable means. What was Hogg's end in view? It was, I think, to place before the world a picture of his friend purged of the faults, inadequacies and eccentricities that at times prompted wild words and

actions, and as a part of that scheme to point to the misplaced gallantry of an idle day as the root of his attitude towards Harriet, leaving no room for the accusation of having betrayed the trust of a friend. There is little to find fault with here.

Did Hogg then go too far in the changes he made? A comparison of the unchanged letters with the changed will afford the most adequate answer. Everyone must make this comparison for himself. In making it one should, however, have in mind the petulancies, the instinctive exaggerations, the well-nigh unconscious misrepresentations, the explosive outbursts that will creep into the letter of one who would fain dramatize himself as deeply wronged, not because reason tells him so (reason he has never consulted), but because that is the rôle he would for the moment assume. Such a one begins at the wrong end; he argues 'I am wronged, and therefore this and this must have happened'; with him the cart is ever before the horse.

Jeaffreson goes on to suggest (and his suggestion is the only one which seems reasonably probable), that Hogg was anxious to give information to those who had a right to it, concerning the unfortunate affair, while being equally anxious to conceal it from the multitude, who would be only too ready to lick salacious lips over so entrancing a morsel of distant impropriety.

There is yet one more point which must be taken into account in any consideration of the reasons for Hogg's altering Shelley's letters before publishing them. It is this: it was not only in the letters referring to Harriet that he made changes; far greater changes were made in Shelley's earlier letters, written before his marriage; letters in which Hogg himself was not in any way concerned.

In these letters (which I propose to publish in my forthcoming book, *Shelley at Oxford*) the changes which Hogg made, and they were many, were obviously intended to tone down the blasphemous opinions which Shelley held in his youth.

The poet's views have always been considered somewhat heretical; these letters will show that in his Oxford days he not only held unorthodox opinions concerning Christian doctrine, but was a fervent and out-

spoken blasphemer against God, and against Christ. It has been held, and possibly with a certain amount of truth, that the windmills against which he, a young and inexperienced Quixote, was tilting, were not the windmills of Christianity, but only those of the stupid and unthinking fundamentalist orthodoxy of his day; that may well be true; but the manner in which he spoke of the Christian faith, the sneers he expressed at the person of the Christ, and the deliberate attempts he made to insult the established religion of his country, were not only outrageous in themselves, but would unquestionably have led to an action for blasphemy, had they ever been publicly expressed.

Even in 1858, when Hogg's *Life of Shelley* appeared, it would have damned Shelley at once in the eyes of the greater number of his readers, had Hogg attempted to transcribe at all exactly what Shelley had written; in addition to which Hogg himself would have run the risk (which in those days was no inconsiderable one), of an indictment for blasphemy for the publication of such views, even though they were not his own.

I have high hopes that the publication of these letters will put an end once for all to some, at any rate, of the calumnies of those who have thought they could best preserve the illusion of a faultless Shelley by a settled depreciation of the character of his friend Hogg.

'For many years', writes Mr Edmund Blunden, 'it has been demonstrated that Hogg's writings about Shelley are largely fiction, and they will be exposed more and more as time goes on.' [Ref: 15.] 'The same author also writes, 'He (Hogg) was incalculable, and he was disloyal.' [Ref: 16.]

Mr. Blunden could scarcely have made these statements had he been aware of the true reasons for the changes made by Hogg in Shelley's letters, self-preservation not being one of these. I cannot think that the passage of time will do anything but demonstrate more clearly Hogg's constancy in friendship.

What Mr Blunden has called his 'veiled insolence to Shelley' [Ref: 17] can be seen in its true light as the result of a curiously protective instinct, which (as I see it) Hogg adopted in order to shield Shelley

from a charge of irresponsibility, whilst showing—as he had to show if his biography were to be honest—Shelley's peculiarities and hallucinations.

Not a few readers will, I hope, find in these pages a full justification for my admiration for the character of this noble and generous-hearted man; one whose friendship for Shelley was a disaster for himself, but the greatest blessing to the poet; one who suffered intensely, and gladly, in the cause of friendship; one to whose character no more untrue and insulting adjective could be applied than the word 'disloyal'.

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